■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-6

Gretchen on text spat: Bong hasn't stopped calling

■ SPORTS / A19

Phil Mickelson nails second Masters title

■ WORLD / A18

Top US Marine regrets Iraq invasion, wants Rumsfeld out

■ NEWS / A5

Oil firms jack up prices of gasoline, diesel again

Black Saturday special nonworking holiday

MALACAÑANG HAS DECLARED BLACK SATURday, April 15, a special nonworking holiday nationwide to give Filipinos more time to mark one of Christendom's most cherished traditions.

"Our people must be given the full and uninterrupted opportunity to ponder on the significance of the Holy Week and to properly observe its traditions with religious fervor, without prejudice to

BLACK/ A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY

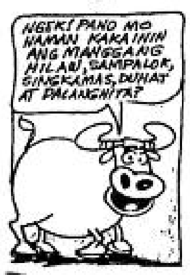
INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, April 11, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 124 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Flying out? Don't carry 'dangerous' seasonings

By Nikko Dizon



NGEK! PANO MO NAMAN KAKAININ ANG MANGGANG HILAW, SAMPALOK, SINGKAMAS, DUHAT AT DALANGHITA?

EVER WONDER WHY THE Filipinos' favorite seasonings like *bagoong* (shrimp paste), *suka* (vinegar), *toyo* (soy sauce) and *patis* (fish sauce) are not allowed on aircraft?

FLYING/ A4

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo shares a light moment with newly inducted Election Commissioner Rene Sarmiento in Malacañang. EDWIN BACASMAS

Davide calls for revamp of Comelec

Submits 6 names as possible members

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau
Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Jerome Aning

RETIRED CHIEF JUSTICE Hilario Davide Jr. has pushed for a revamp of the Commission on Elections and submitted to Malacañang the names of six people "of integrity" as possible commissioners of a poll body tainted with allegations of fraud and connivance with politicians.

The Palace yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo would seriously consider the Davide recommendations.

"Coming from the former Chief Justice himself, the President will give that short list a lot of weight," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in an interview.

Speaking to the INQUIRER in Cebu City, Davide, the President's adviser on electoral reforms, stressed the urgency of reforming

DAVIDE/ A6

Makati businessmen also warn GMA on hasty Cha-cha drive

By Christian V. Esguerra,
Norman Bordadora
and TJ Burgonio

THE INFLUENTIAL MAKATI BUSIness Club yesterday joined the Catholic Church hierarchy in warning the Arroyo administration against hastily pushing for a parliamentary system, saying this will have a negative impact on the country and the economy.

Reflecting the concerns voiced by bishops in a pastoral letter on Friday, the business group cautioned against "the haste and haphazard manner in which the government is pushing for constitutional amendments."

"Such a fast-track process, without benefit of enlightened public discussion and debate on the merits of a constitutional amendment, may have negative effects on the economy," the MBC said.

In its pastoral letter, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines expressed alarm over the administration-backed "people's initiative" to gather the signatures of 12 percent of registered voters and 3 percent of them in each legislative district to pave the way for amending the 1987 Constitution and introduce a parliamentary system of government.

MAKATI/ A6

GMA'S SUPREME SACRIFICE

Opposition pushes snap poll

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AFTER BUNGLING AN IMPEACHment attempt last year against President Macapagal-Arroyo and failing to get her to step aside, the opposition is urging her this Holy Week to "make the supreme sacrifice" and call a snap election.

Malacañang has dismissed a similar suggestion, earlier broached by Sen. Edgardo Angara.

The Palace also has a retort to critics who persist in reminding Filipinos that public surveys show how much the 59-year-old President is disliked and how her ousted predecessor, Joseph Estrada, is loved.

"We are past the era of counting popularity points," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

"Popularity will not guarantee jobs, investments, social justice or law and order—this has been clearly shown by recent history," said Bunye, referring to Estrada's landslide win in 1998 and his disappointing performance in his three years in office.

OPPOSITION/ A13

MUTINOUS Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala talks about a Right-Left coup plot in Malacañang's latest video documentary. EDWIN BACASMAS

Palace video presents mutineer as witness

By Christine O. Avendaño

A NEW MALACAÑANG VIDEO documentary on the coup attempt in February has a "surprise witness" who claims that an alliance between rightist elements and communist rebels started after the Oakwood mutiny in 2003.

The surprise witness is none other than Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala, one of the leaders of Magdalo, the group of young officers who led the mutiny. He is in detention at Fort Bonifacio and is charged with coup d'etat.

The supposed alliance, aimed at ousting President Macapagal-Arroyo, was one of the justifications the President gave for declaring a state of national emergency on Feb. 24. She lifted the state of emergency a week later.

"Sabwatan sa Kataksilan" (Alliance in Treachery) opened with Gambala saying that representatives from the Left had made efforts to "make ties with us."

"They approached us to talk about building an alliance with them in an effort to seize power," Gambala said.

Malacañang previewed the 15-minute documentary yesterday to buttress its contention that the Feb. 24 coup attempt was the handiwork of the Right and the Left.

In the documentary, Gen. Gen-

PALACE/ A4

Outsourcing seen as growth engine

OUTSOURCING IS THE WAY FORward for the Philippines, with employment, revenues and investments from the sector expected to rise by at least 42 percent this year, according to Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

While call centers are now at the forefront, other big business process outsourcing firms are expanding their operations beyond call centers in this English-speaking Southeast Asian country, Neri said in a statement issued yesterday.

He cited a study jointly sponsored by the trade department's Board of Investments and two industry groups—the Business Process Association of the Philippines and the Commission on Information, Communication and Technology—that forecast outsourcing jobs rising by 44 percent this year compared to 2005.

The study also projected outsourcing revenues would grow by 52 percent and investments by 42 percent in 2006, Neri said.

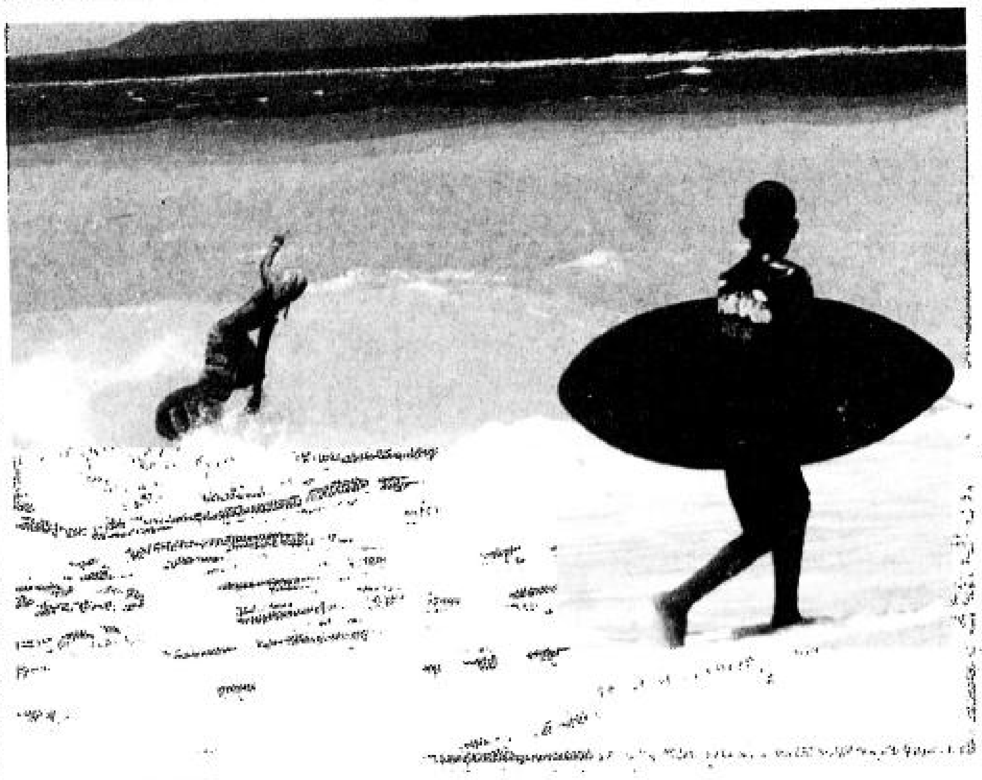
He said the study forecast investments would be around P12 billion ($234.83 million) this year and predicted that up to 1.2 million people would be employed in the sector in 2010 compared to 233,000 people at present.

"Outsourcing is a sector with much dynamism. Companies are also getting more creative to respond to industry demand. For example, some firms are buying warehouses because of the lack of office space," Neri said.

He cited industry estimates that business process outsourcing would bring in $3.8 billion in revenues to the Philippines this year, nearly four times higher than the 2001 figure of $1 billion.

In 2001, Philippine revenues from business process outsourc-

OUTSOURCING/ A4



SKIMBOARDIN'
A participant shows his skill in riding the waves during the 2nd National Skimboarding Competition held at the Dahican Beach Resort in Mati, Davao Oriental, over the weekend. NICO ALCONABA/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Text Mary program instant hit

By Christian V. Esguerra

A TROUBLED "TEXTER" HAS confessed that his father is gay. He is praying for his father to leave his teenage lover because the relationship is immoral.

One girl sent this desperate text. She's pregnant and her boyfriend has left her. She wants him back for the sake of the baby.

A troubled mother is about to deliver her fourth child. Her two other children are enrolling in school next month. But she has just lost her job and doesn't know what to do. She sends a prayer text asking for strength and guidance.

These troubled souls are not alone. Hundreds of others have learned about their predicament

TEXT MARY/ A13

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas including Palawan and Mindanao will continue to experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/10/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

PAJERO IN GARAGE

Palace exec loses car to thieves

A MALACAÑANG OFFICIAL LOST HIS MITSUBISHI PAJERO to thieves who sneaked into his San Pedro, Laguna, home in the wee hours of Sunday as he and his family slept.

Press Undersecretary Robert Rivera said yesterday thieves entered the garage of his home at La Marea Hill subdivision and took the white sport utility vehicle without waking up the household. The vehicle was a 2000 model with plate number MTA 222.

Subdivision security guards said they last saw the SUV parked in Rivera's garage at around 1:30 a.m. during their patrol.

Rivera said the Pajero, which he bought in 2003, was his personal vehicle and he had last used it on Friday.

"The car was parked at the house for the past two days so the thieves probably thought no one was home," Rivera told reporters.

Rivera learned about the theft at around 6 a.m. when the maid woke him to tell him the vehicle was missing and their front gate was wide open.

Rivera said he immediately called the police.

While the Pajero was insured, Rivera said he was miffed because he had sold two cars to buy the SUV.

"So for those observing Holy Week who would be out of town but leave their vehicles at home, make sure you put an alarm [in your vehicle]," was Rivera's advice to car owners.

Rivera now goes to work at the Palace in an old Hyundai Grace van, which happened to be parked outside his home but which was apparently ignored by the picky thieves.

Christine O. Avendaño

COA finds overpriced farm machines in Payatas

By Philip C. Tubeza

FUNDS FROM THE CONTROVERSIAL GININtuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) program were used to purchase five farm machines which found its way to the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City, purportedly as part of the government's solid waste management program, the Commission on Audit (COA) final audit report said.

The COA, however, discovered that the machines were not only overpriced but were also purchased without public bidding.

The machines were also not among the farm implements and facilities listed under the Department of Agriculture's GMA program, it said.

The five machines, worth P3 million, were supposed to be used to convert biodegradable waste materials to compost soil conditioner or organic fertilizers, the COA said.

But COA said two of the machines were overpriced by a total of around P650,000.

"We recommend that (the DA), in all procurements, ensure compliance with the Procurement Reform Act (RA 9184), particularly public bidding, to obtain the most advantageous price for the government," the COA report said.

COA inspectors found the five machines—three shredders, a hammermill/lifter, and a pelletizer—in Payatas on Nov. 17, 2005.

They were among the 14 units of fabricated mechanical equipment the DA Southern Tagalog regional field unit bought for P14 million through a negotiated deal with LCV Design and Fabrication Corp.

Of the 14 machines, six, including the two in Payatas, were overpriced by a total of P2.75 million, the report said.

"DA-RFU IV purchased 14 units of fabricated mechanical equipment although they were not classified as farm implements under the GMA Program, at a cost of P14 million through negotiation (or) without the benefit of public bidding," it added.

The COA audit team reiterated "the need to comply with the required bidding... inasmuch as equipment with similar functions is available in the market."

One of the shredder/chipper units bought with a price tag of P750,000 was available in the market at only P226,320 while another chipper bought at P250,000 was available at the price of P121,055, the report said.

The DA said that while the machines were not among the farm implements included in the list provided by GMA rice program national coordinator Frisco M. Malabanan, "the choice of the shredder under the 2004 Farm Inputs/Implements program was made by the proponents themselves considering the actual needs in the areas where the equipment would be used."

The proponent for the machines found in Payatas was Quezon City Rep. Nanette Castelo Daza, whose district received P3 million from the P728-million fertilizer fund.

"Such kind of equipment was likewise claimed to be appropriate due to the increasing demand for organic agricultural products that would be environmentally safe," the DA added.

PAGC to finish probe of fertilizer scam in May

THE PRESIDENTIAL ANTI-GRAFT COMMISSION EXpects to wind up its investigation into the alleged involvement of Department of Agriculture officials in the alleged multi-million fertilizer scam by the end of May.

PAGC Chair Dr. Constancia P. De Guzman assured the public that the PAGC is exhausting all means to get to the bottom of the controversy.

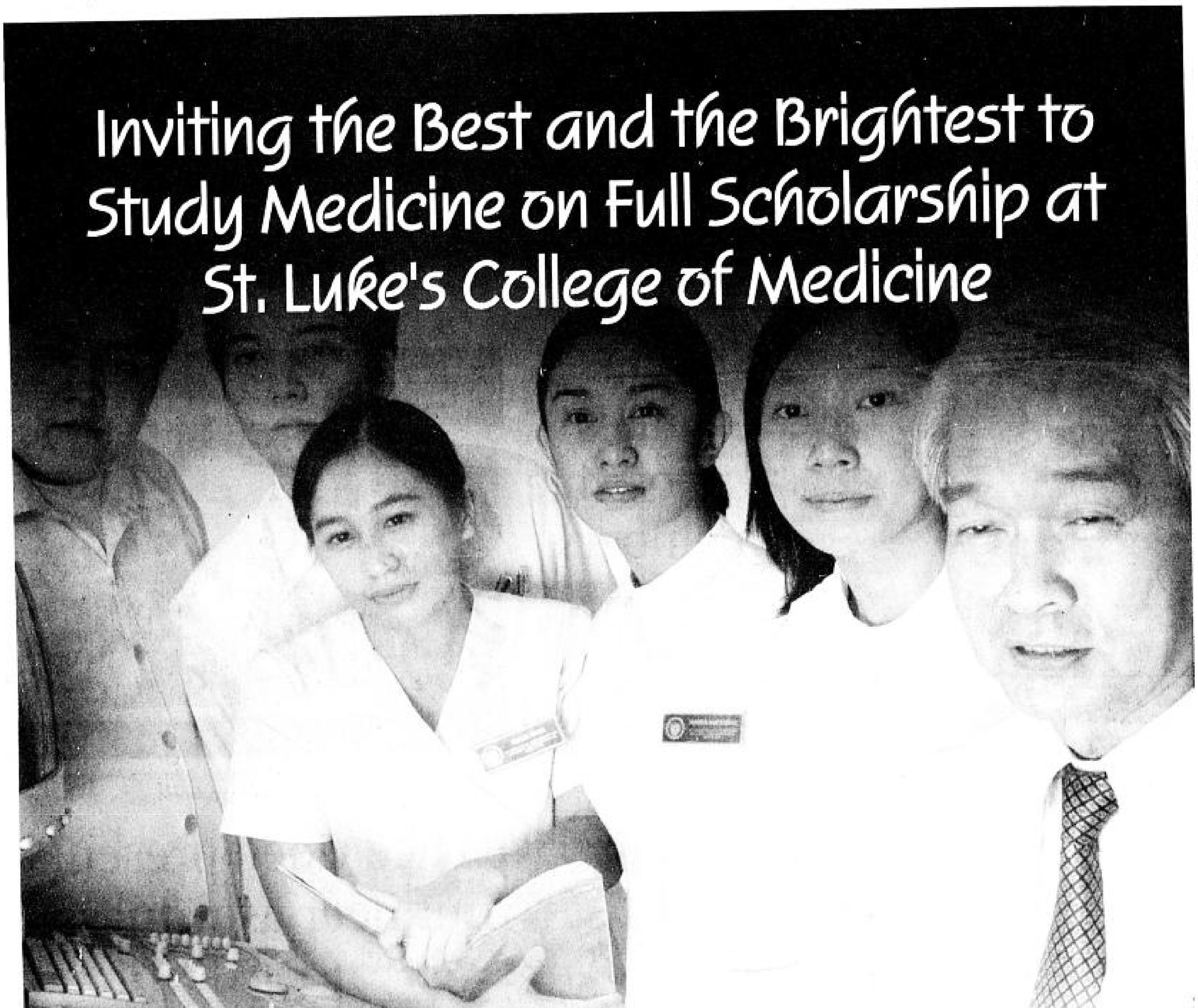
The PAGC started its investigation into the fertilizer scam in early March this year.

"This investigation is an independent investigation It is not entirely dependent on reports of the Commission on Audit, the Senate or Department of Agriculture reports or other government bodies. This investigation is really a search for truth," De Guzman said.

According to De Guzman, the PAGC special operations team assigned to the case has submitted to the commission proper its initial report based in part on voluminous documents gathered from various sources.

Immediately after the Holy Week, she said, the team will hold a series of conferences to get testimonies and statements from individuals who have personal knowledge of the transactions and other documents related to the alleged fertilizer scam.

The PAGC urged the public and the media to act as its watchdog and demand for the results of the investigation on May 31.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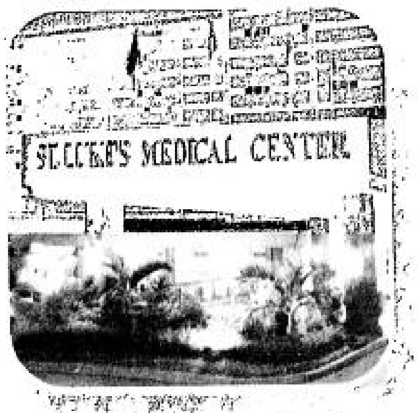

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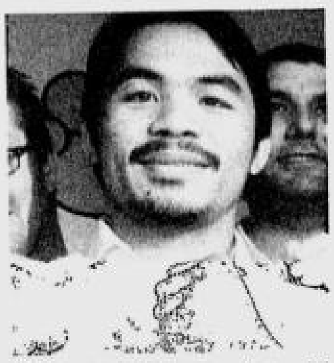
Pacman beats taxman to the punch; tax paid secret

By Cynthia D. Balana


PACQUIAO: Amount substantial

HE BEAT THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue to the punch but the BIR was able to get a piece of him.

Boxing champion Manny Pacquiao did not wait for the taxman to come running after him when he went to the BIR yesterday to file his 2005 income tax return ahead of the April 17 filing deadline.

But the amount he paid was kept secret because the BIR is not authorized to reveal how much an individual or corporation pays in taxes, said BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag.

All one of Pacquiao's lawyers, Franklin Gacal, would say was the amount was "substantial."

Buñag said Pacquiao's payment also covered "discrepancies" found in his 2004 income tax return, including interest. He also did not reveal what the discrepancies were or for how much.

Pacquaio himself cited "security reasons" for his refusal to say how much he made last year. He is facing a demand for child support from a woman who claims he fathered her child.

The boxer, whose career was recharged after he knocked out Mexican Eric Morales in the 10th round of their grudge fight last January, is scheduled to fight Oscar Larios, another Mexican, on July 2 at the Araneta Center.

In a press conference with Buñag after he filed his return, Pacquiao was asked if he was not afraid of being kidnapped.

"Oo, baril iyon, suntok lang ako (Yes, they have guns, I only have my fist)," he replied.

Pacquiao joined Buñag in calling on all taxpayers not to wait for the deadline but to file their returns early in order to enjoy a "hassle-free and peaceful" Holy Week.

"Sa mga kababayan natin, sana magbayad na kayo para wala ng problema," he said.

For his part, Buñag said he was confident the BIR would exceed its quarterly tax collection target by P2.9 billion.

He said total collections from January to March this year totaled P134.32 billion, compared to P109.67 billion collected in the same period last year.

From April 1 to 10 this year alone, he said, collections reached P5 billion, putting the bureau on track to surpass its second-quarter target.

Buñag also urged taxpayers to file their returns before the deadline because they would not be granted amnesty.

"For those who fail to beat the April 17 deadline and those who fail to file, the appropriate sanctions and penalties shall be imposed," he said.

Military tailing KMP leader, say militants

SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING men believed to be agents of the military have been stalking a national peasant leader at his home in Malolos City, Bulacan during the last few weeks, a militant group claimed yesterday.

Quoting neighbors and relatives, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said several men were seen snooping around the house of its secretary general, Danilo "Ka Daning" Ramos, at least half a dozen times since last month.

On Sunday, two men came looking for Ramos at a basketball court where the peasant leader usually played basketball, according to the KMP.

Coming on the heels of the assassination of leftist activists in Central Luzon in the last few months, the men's presence in the neighborhood had prompted the militant group to put security measures in place.

"We have told him (Ramos) not to go home," KMP information officer Carl Ala said. "We believe they are out either to abduct or to kill him. Our office (in Quezon City) has been under surveillance many times before, but this is different this time; their target is Ka Daning (Ramos)." *Luige A. del Puerto*

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Flying out? Don't carry 'dangerous' ...

From page A1

It's not only because of their pungent smell. They have ingredients, particularly salt, that are considered corrosive and could pose a danger to an aircraft, said Supt. Rizalino Roxas, chief of operations of the Airport Security Center (ASC).

The ASC oversees all the security agencies at the airport.

If these seasonings spill, "they could destroy parts of the plane, including its electronic parts and wiring, little by little," Roxas said yesterday.

Aside from *bagoong*, "all kinds of seasoning sauces, especially those with pungent or acrid odors such as fish sauces, soy sauce, all sea produce and salted products" are considered "dangerous goods" by the Civil Aviation Training Center (CATC), which is under the International Civil Aviation Organization (Icao).

"One has to be sure that the cover will not open. Or if the bottle breaks, it is sealed in such a way that the contents would not spill onto any part of the aircraft," Roxas said.

Salt, in large volumes and if improperly packed, is specifically considered a "dangerous substance" in the consolidated list of prohibited items recently released by the ASC.

The ASC based the list on the items prohibited by the Icao, Transportation Security Authority, Philippine National Police-Aviation Security Group, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) and the airlines operating out of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The ASC list has some 200 prohibited items classified under "weapons," "dangerous articles," "explosives" and "dangerous substances."

Scissors, scotch tape

Among the weapons are handguns of all calibers, flare guns, bows and arrows, darts, swords, pocket knives, screwdrivers and scissors or any metal with pointed tips.

Golf clubs and balls, billiard cues and balls, fishing rods, rulers and letter openers, toy guns, baseball bats and all kinds of tape, such as masking tape, scotch tape, duct tape and electrical tape, are among those classified as "dangerous articles."

Floor wax

Explosives range from firecrackers, fragmentation grenades, TNT, nitroglycerin, gun powder, dynamite, ammunition, to C3 or C4 plastic explosives.

Aside from the sauces, items considered "dangerous substances" include acetone, hair spray, paint thinner, astringent, magnets, fertilizer, spray paint and floor wax.

Except for explosives, the other items, including seasonings, may be allowed on the aircraft as long as they are properly packed and checked in and not hand-carried in the passenger cabin, according to Roxas.

Roxas also reminded Filipino passengers, particularly overseas workers going to the Middle East, that *bagoong* sautéed in pork oil and "*hopiang baboy*" were not allowed in countries in the Middle East in deference to Islam.

The United States has also banned *hopiang baboy* because of quarantine concerns.

Of the list of prohibited items, Roxas said: "We've had this for a long time now but we are reiterating it in light of the peak travel season."

The Miaa has been receiving inquiries from passengers and travel agencies on what items could be brought on airplanes since the summer season began.

Palace video presents ...

From page A1

eroso Senga, Armed Forces chief of staff, said it was not the first time that members of the military had struck an alliance with the Left.

He mentioned the case of Lt. Crispin Tagamolila, a former Army finance officer, who defected to the New People's Army (NPA) in 1971. The NPA is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Senga said it was after the Oakwood mutiny in July 2003 that the NPA thought of linking up with the young soldiers.

The documentary said representatives of the Magdalo and the NPA started a series of meetings in several hotels and restaurants in Quezon City and Makati City in December 2003. They reportedly talked about reorganizing the Magdalo and recruiting members to the new alliance.

Honasan

The documentary said the Magdalo name was changed to Makabayang Kawal Pilipino (MKP) at Mamamayang Kaisa sa Pakikibaka.

At the end of 2004, former Sen. Gregorio Honasan led the meetings of the MKP with the NPA. Lawyer Jose Christopher Belmonte, who was identified as a CPP cadre, attended several of the meetings, according to the documentary that quoted intelligence reports.

It was only in early 2006 that the alliance welcomed new members, according to the documentary.

The alliance of the two groups was confirmed in January when authorities arrested Belmonte, along with Lt. Lawrence San Juan, one of the Oakwood mutineers who escaped last year.

The arrest of San Juan and Belmonte in Batangas showed the deep and wide conspiracy between the CPP-NPA and the Magdalo group, the documentary said.

Oplan Hackle

Authorities seized from San Juan and Belmonte several documents, including that of a so-called Oplan Hackle that sought to bring down the Arroyo administration during the 20th anniversary of Edsa I in February.

The documents said Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim was the ground force commander for the coup. Lim was relieved of his post as First Scout Ranger chief and has been restricted to quarters since Feb. 24.

The documentary said the coup was prevented by the state of national emergency declared by Ms Arroyo.

Oplan 4G

The arrest of Maj. Joaquin Aquino, who was said to be part of the group Para Sa Bayan (PSB), saw the capture of documents detailing another plot called Oplan 4G.

Oplan 4G sought to repeat the Edsa I uprising of February 1986 that led to the ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos. This time, the rallies would be supported by the military.

The documentary said the plotters had also planned to hold big protest rallies in March to force Ms Arroyo to step down. If they failed last month, they would have continued with the rallies until Labor Day on May 1.

Should it succeed, the PSB planned to come out with three proclamations, including one placing the country under a state of emergency.

Another proclamation would have established a transition government in which a new leader for the country would be chosen. But it was not known who this person would be, according to the documentary.

Transition government

A few seconds before the documentary ends, Gambala appears anew.

"It's for you to decide, but as for me, I've been there ... There are certain things that we can't learn. You have to experience it before you understand. Now I understand. I don't want to do again what I did [in 2003] because it was wrong," Gambala said.

After the showing of the documentary, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said he was touched by Gambala's words because, for the first time, the officer admitted he had committed a mistake.

"The words he uttered feel sincere and I'm sure his sincerity will be received by other men in uniform, to the extent that his statements will be helpful," Bunye told reporters.

Outsourcing seen ...

From page A1

ing amounted to $349 million, according to Neri.

$10B by 2010

Global consultancy McKinsey has reported that at least 120 outsourcing companies operate in the Philippines, predicting that revenues from the sector would reach $10 billion by 2010, Neri said.

He said the Philippines should aim to get 10 percent of the market for medical transcription amid the massive exodus of Filipino doctors, nurses and other medical workers for higher-paying jobs abroad.

"Think of all the high-paying jobs that will provide our medical professionals," Neri said, citing reports that the United States needs about 80,000 medical transcriptionists.

Medical transcription outsourcing in the Philippines occupies just a 1-percent share of the US market of $12 billion, he added.

Neri said the outsourcing boom should also be a boon for other industries.

"This is clearly a market for the telecom companies offering land line connectivity. Real estate is also benefiting from the surging demand for office space while restaurants open 24 hours a day cater to the food and leisure needs of call center agents," he said. *AFP*

Black Saturday ...

From page A1

the public interest," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita in Proclamation No. 1018.

Ermita said the government was just going by tradition since Black Saturday, which falls between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, had been declared a special day in the past.

While administration allies have vowed to use the Lenten season to campaign for Charter change, President Macapagal-Arroyo and members of her Cabinet apparently will be doing a lot of praying during the same period.

Ms Arroyo and her Cabinet are expected to hie off to Baguio City starting today for a two-day Lenten retreat at the presidential Mansion.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the religious exercise was a "good occasion to reflect and to gain wider, broader and deeper perspectives on the national situation."

"It's time for everyone to reflect on where we were, where we are and where we're headed, both on an official and private basis," Bunye told reporters.

The President's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, said the retreat would be an occasion for prayer.

On Maundy Thursday, Ms Arroyo is expected to visit churches in Baguio for the "Visita Iglesia."

Her schedule on Good Friday, Black Saturday and Easter Sunday is not open to media as it will be a private time for her and her family.

The President is expected to return to Manila on Monday after inaugurating a newly renovated ward of the Baguio City General Hospital. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño*

Corrections

HATAMAN

MAGTUBO

IN THE APRIL 10 ISSUE, the wrong photo (right) was used to accompany a Page A4 story—"Party-list groups to lose seats in parliamentary gov't, says lawmaker." The wrong photo was that of Partido ng Manggagawa Rep. Renato Magtubo—not Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman. Hataman was the lawmaker quoted in the story.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a story on Page A10—".5-M foreign visitors set new RP tourism record"—misstated the number of foreign tourist arrivals in the Philippines from January to February 2006. The correct figure is 491,871—not 420,375—foreign tourist arrivals. In the same story, the estimated foreign tourist arrivals in March was also misstated. Preliminary figures indicated that foreign tourist arrivals last month would surpass 8,000—not 80,000.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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X-TRAIL 200 4x2	1,140,000	114,000	47,500	31,667	23,750	17,733	14,250	12,540
X-TRAIL 200X 4x4	1,250,000	125,000	52,083	34,722	26,042	19,444	15,625	13,750
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LENTEN RUSH

Overseas Filipinos from different parts of the world fill the arrival area of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Monday. Thousands landed yesterday to spend their Lenten and summer vacation in the country. Next stop for the crowds—the domestic airport, bus and ferry terminals, as both tourists and locals head for the provinces. JESS YUSON

Oil firms jack up prices of gasoline, diesel again

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER SUCCESSIVE PRICE rollbacks last month, the country's oil companies jacked up the prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter beginning last Saturday.

Oil majors Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. initiated the increase, adjusting their prices at 12:01 a.m. Saturday.

Flying V hiked its prices by the same level at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, followed by Total (Philippines) Corp. at 6 a.m. and Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. later in the morning.

Eastern Petroleum Corp. increased its prices at 5 a.m. today.

The oil firms cited the rise in international prices as well as market forces as the reason for adjusting their fuel prices.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude jumped to $61.31 a barrel in the first seven days of April from $57.82 a barrel last month.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products also soared to $75.07 a barrel in the April 1-7 period from last month's average of $69.64 a barrel.

MOPS-based diesel surged to an April average of $82.07 a barrel from $77.99 a barrel in March.

Since the start of the year, the oil firms have hiked gasoline prices four times by a total of P2 a liter. Diesel and kerosene prices have been increased five times by a total of P2.50 per liter.

The latest adjustments bring premium unleaded gasoline prices to between P36.79 and P38.50 a liter, diesel to between P31.75 and P34.75 a liter, and kerosene to between P34.42 and P37 a liter.

RP asks Malaysia to speed up repatriation of detained Pinoys

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT is working to speed up the repatriation of Filipinos held at a Malaysian detention center for illegal aliens struck by a riot last week, the Philippine ambassador to Malaysia said yesterday.

Ambassador Victoriano Lecaros said he and other officials were coordinating with Malaysian authorities on looking into conditions at the Menggatal detention center in Kota Kinabalu, capital of the east Malaysia state of Sabah, and returning the 1,173 Filipinos held there quickly.

Among the Filipino prisoners are 151 boys and 90 girls, he said.

Sixty-two inmates, including an undetermined number of Filipinos, climbed a fence and escaped during the riot at the facility, police said.

Sabah has an extensive land border with Indonesia's Kalimantan province, and is separated from the southern Philippines by a short boat ride. Many illegal immigrants cross the border to seek work in wealthier Malaysia.

The Menggatal center was meant to temporarily house illegal immigrants pending deportation. Often, however, authorities in their countries refuse to take them back immediately, demanding greater proof of citizenship.

Lecaros said the embassy was coordinating with Sabah officials on the completion of the Filipinos' detention process and the issuance of travel documents so they could go home. He said the Sabah authorities had been asked to ensure that the rights and well-being of the Filipinos were safeguarded. *AP with a report from Volt Contreras*

Naia offers summer work for Pasay, Parañaque youths

SOME 100 OUT-OF-SCHOOL youths, college students, and jobless residents of Pasay and Parañaque cities will get a chance to work at the country's premier international airport under the "Airport Summer Work Program."

The program will run from April 19 to June 2.

"This project also aims to bring the government closer to the people by way of giving them employment," said Judith Dolot, chief of the Manila International Airport Authority Public Affairs Office.

The participants, who will be paid P200 a day, will be required to report for work from Monday to Friday. *Nikko Dizon*

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56% of Filipinos oppose Cha-cha, says SWS

THE CHA-CHA TRAIN MAY NOT be that unstoppable after all.

The majority of Filipinos (56 percent) plan to vote "No" should a plebiscite be held now to approve amendments to the 1987 Constitution, according to results of a nationwide survey by Social Weather Stations.

The survey, conducted on March 8-14, covered 1,200 adults. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Groups like Sigaw ng Bayan are collecting the signatures of at least 12 percent of the registered voters nationwide and at least 3 percent of the registered voters in each legislative district for a people's initiative, one of the three modes of amending the Constitution.

Their petition for Charter change, endorsed by no less than the Arroyo administration, contains the proposition: "Do you approve of the amendments [to] Article 6 and 7 of the 1987 Constitution changing the form of government from the present bicameral-presidential to a unicameral-parliamentary system of government in order to achieve greater efficiency, simplicity and economy in government and providing an Article 18 as transitory provisions for the orderly shift from one system to the other?"

The administration expects a plebiscite on the proposition by June, but opponents of Charter change claim that the initiative is illegal because of the absence of an enabling law.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has urged old-time politicians to stand back or get run over because the Charter change (Cha-cha) train has left the station.

Only 30 percent of the respondents agreed that the "Commission on Elections could be trusted to honestly count the votes of the people in a plebiscite to ratify a new Constitution," SWS said yesterday.

SWS said 55 percent of the respondents rejected the proposal for Ms Arroyo to be allowed to become prime minister. Only 18 percent supported it.

Former President Fidel Ramos' suggestion to amend the Constitution to cut short Ms Arroyo's term before 2010 was acceptable to 50 percent and unacceptable to 24 percent.

Fifty percent of the respondents rejected proposals for the cancellation of the 2007 elections and the extension of the terms of all elected officials until 2010. Only 25 percent supported the proposals.

A bigger percentage (56 percent) thumbed down the suggestion that legislators instead of voters elect the head of government. Twenty percent favored it.

The survey showed that Filipinos would rather continue having a Senate, with the proposal to have only one chamber in a parliament rejected by 38 percent and accepted by only 25 percent.

The survey also found very strong opposition to removing the limit on the term of office of the President.

Seventy-six percent said there should be a limit to the term of a prime minister. The median answer was five years.

SWS said public awareness of the proposals to amend the Constitution was very low.

Only 13 percent said they knew at least the most important parts of the proposals; 40 percent knew a little, and 46 percent did not know anything about the proposals.

The survey also tested sentiments on proposed amendments to the Constitution, but only two of the amendments were favored by the respondents.

Forty-one percent agreed with the proposal to form regional governments; 20 percent were opposed to it.

Thirty-five percent were in favor of lessening restrictions on foreign participation in the economy, while 25 percent were against the idea.

Kate Pedroso, PDI Research

Davide calls for revamp of Comelec

DAVIDE

PDI PHOTO

From page A1

the Comelec but said he had yet to receive word from Ms Arroyo about his recommendations.

"It is not necessarily a total revamp but basic infrastructural change," he told the INQUIRER.

Davide declined to identify his six nominees but they came from his initial list of 11 names.

He said he believed his six nominees "can really restore the credibility of the commission" whose integrity has been tarnished because of allegations of corruption and poll cheating.

At the center of the scandals that have ravaged public confidence in the Comelec is the accusation that Ms Arroyo, in purported wiretapped phone conversations with former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, conspired with him to tamper with the results of the 2004 presidential election.

Ms Arroyo and Garcillano have denied any wrongdoing.

Beyond dispute

"I recommend them (the six) because I know that they are highly capable persons of integrity and character, competence, probity and independence which are the very criteria the Constitution also prescribes even for the members of the judiciary," Davide said.

"Their integrity is beyond dispute. I believe that they can really restore the credibility of the commission," he stressed.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. welcomed the recommendations for poll reforms, saying "they are the fruits of Davide's consultation with us."

But Abalos dodged comment on Davide's disclosure that he had recommended six nominees to Ms Arroyo.

A political matter

"I cannot comment on that because I haven't heard about it," Abalos told the INQUIRER by phone. "But if that's true, appointing commissioners is a prerogative of the President and it is a political matter."

The Constitution provides for a Comelec chair and six commissioners. Only four of the six commissioner seats are filled at present. Appointees are made by the President with the consent of the Commission on Appointments.

The Constitution fixes the commissioner's term at seven years without reappointment. Members can only be removed from office through impeachment or resignation.

When asked if a revamp was possible considering that commissioners could only be removed through impeachment, Davide said changes in the Constitution were also part of the long report he submitted to Ms Arroyo on March 10.

Davide praying

"I am hopeful, I am praying, that they would be in place because of the very nature of the proposals which are urgent," Davide said.

He declined to specify the provisions in the Charter he wanted changed, saying he would rather leave it to Ms Arroyo to release to the public the contents of his report.

Davide said he marked his report as urgent so his proposals would be implemented before the 2007 elections.

"The final report, which I submitted to the President on March 10, was quite long because these are reforms some of which would be a continuation of what I believed should be in place before 2007, then the medium-term reforms and the long-term reforms," Davide said.

Political dynasty, nepotism

"The long-term reforms would include what has been indicated in the newspapers," he added.

Davide said that when he submitted his interim report on Feb. 10, the President called him a week later "to elaborate and to explain."

He said some of his recommendations included the proposals he had submitted to the 1971 Constitutional Convention and the 1986 Constitutional Commission, particularly on political dynasties and nepotism.

He said he included in his latest proposals a recommendation for higher penalties for election offenses and proposals for an easier way to prosecute these kinds of cases.

Davide said that Ms Arroyo might need some time to reflect on his "suggestions."

Worthy task

In a statement, Ms Arroyo said she appreciated "the worthy task undertaken by (Davide) ... and his eminent recommendations on the matter of electoral reforms."

"These recommendations will be closely and seriously considered in the light of the common desire to cure the ills of our electoral process, preclude the resurgence of political turmoil, and drive the air of poisoned politics out of the degenerated system," she said.

Ms Arroyo also said Davide's inputs had "given a strong impetus to our common goals in the national interest" that should encourage everyone to get on board "the train of electoral reform."

Proposed reforms

The Palace said that in his recommendations, Davide called for a ban on the appointment of local officials and congressmen to any public office during their term in office, and any senator to any public office within three years of his election.

Only a few months ago, Ms Arroyo tapped Rep. Ronaldo Puno to be interior secretary and Rep. Rolando Andaya to be budget secretary.

Davide's other recommendations include a ban on political dynasties, fixing the terms of congressmen and local government officials to four years, holding the national and local elections on different dates, and prohibiting elective officials from switching parties in the middle of their terms.

Even a political party supportive of the administration believes the Comelec needs to be purged to make it credible again.

Congressional leaders welcomed the package of constitutional amendments proposed by Davide, saying it lent credibility to the ongoing Charter change drive.

Need for Cha-cha

Rep. Marcelino Libanan (Lakas), vice chair of the House committee on justice, said Davide only underscored the urgent need for Cha-cha.

Rep. Mauricio Domogan (Lakas), vice chair of the committee on constitutional amendments, said Davide's recommendations highlighted the need for reforms in the political system, such as doing away with the "obsolete mechanisms which are a drag on its democratic processes."

"All his proposals are good. But let's not forget that our main problem is the instability brought about by poll fraud in 2004. Unless we solve that, not even Cha-cha can improve the average Filipino's lot in life," said Cibac party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva.

What Filipinos want

The Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, with which National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales is affiliated, said that while Ms Arroyo could not remove Comelec officials, she could "exercise persuasive powers" to convince its officials linked to anomalies to resign to pave the way for reforms.

The P1.3-billion contract for the purchase of automated counting machines, election fraud and the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal have blackened the poll body's reputation.

A recent Pulse Asia survey showed that 52 percent of Filipinos want the current Comelec commissioners to quit.

PDSP spokesperson Jose "Nonong" Ricafrente said Abalos and the other commissioners linked to the ACM deal should step down "before any genuine reforms can be implemented."

"These officials are impeding reforms and doing the country a great disservice by clinging to their posts. The government cannot hope to regain the people's trust in the poll body and in the electoral process if these officials tainted with anomalies remain in power," Ricafrente said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

He won't comment on signature campaign

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—RELUCTANT TO add fuel to the fire, retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. yesterday stayed away from the controversy swirling around a Malacañang-backed campaign to amend the Constitution through a signature campaign.

It was Davide who wrote the Supreme Court's 1997 decision saying there was no enabling law to implement a people's initiative as a means of amending the Charter.

Davide said both proponents and critics "have a point" and advised them "to take the most appropriate means to confront the issue."

"I would simply wish to avoid [comment] for the meantime. Let them explore all the possibilities instead of me giving an opinion," he told the INQUIRER. "It's best that these issues would be contested in a proper forum by them."

Davide reserved his comment when asked if it was possible for the Supreme Court to revise its earlier ruling.

"I can't make an opinion now because, in the first place, the issue is not before the Court and the members of the Court still have to study the issue. I am sure this would be carefully deliberated upon, taking into account the new members of the Court," he said.

"Right now, there are only two members who participated in the deliberation of the 1997 ruling, Justice (Artemio) Panganiban and Justice (Reynato) Puno," he added.

Davide said the Commission on Elections "must take the most appropriate means to confront the issue."

"I'm sure there are available remedies but I would not give any advice as to what would be the remedies because I don't want to preempt them," he said.

Makati businessmen also warn GMA on hasty Cha-cha drive

From page A1

A single question is posed in the people's initiative—whether Filipinos agree to the adoption of a unicameral parliament and unspecified "transitory provisions" that will govern the nation during the interim period during the shift from the presidential system.

Moves to amend the Constitution gained urgency in July amid growing calls for the resignation of Ms Arroyo over allegations she stole the 2004 presidential election—charges the Chief Executive has denied vehemently. Former President Fidel Ramos had proposed the shift as an "exit strategy" for Ms Arroyo.

Congressmen say the people's initiative has gathered more than 9 million signatures in spite of opposition by business and church groups—two of the main pillars of Philippine society.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno denied that "Charter change is being steamrollered or railroaded."

"What the opponents of constitutional reforms probably don't know is that this has been a long-standing issue which is being discussed down to the municipal level," Puno said in a press release.

No basis in Charter

"The current attempt to not only amend but revise the Constitution by a people's initiative has no basis under the Constitution," the MBC said, pointing out that the effort was not backed by an "enabling law" passed by Congress.

The group also recalled that the Supreme Court had shot down a similar initiative in 1997 and permanently enjoined the Commission on Elections from entertaining any such petition until a sufficient law had been enacted.

"The amendment of the Constitution is a very serious matter; a wholesale change can only be undertaken either through a constituent assembly or a constitutional commission," the MBC said.

"A change from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government involves a major ideological shift from a system of checks and balance between three departments of government to the fusion of the executive and legislative powers in one entity.

"Surely, a paradigmatic shift of this magnitude cannot be considered a minor amendment. This requires more careful study and public discussion to determine what is in the best interest of the nation economically, socially and politically.

Negative repercussions

"The fact that an amendment is now being rushed with only political provisions in mind does not augur well for the country. If such major decisions are carried out with undue haste, we feel that such rushed decisions will have negative repercussions for the country and its economy," the MBC said.

Also yesterday, Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles said Ms Arroyo risked losing whatever goodwill she was still enjoying from the prelates if she brushed aside the CBCP's apprehensions on the people's initiative.

"If the CBCP's guidelines will be ignored, she may see the CBCP openly distancing itself from her. She needs the CBCP, especially its silence," Arguelles told the INQUIRER in a text message.

He reminded the President that the CBCP's "refusal" to join the clamor for her ouster in July 2005 through a pastoral letter "allowed her to bounce back."

For Ms Arroyo to ignore the CBCP's moral guidelines could convince her allies in the episcopate that it was "wiser, more worthwhile and necessary" to join the more articulate and militant bishops in the Church hierarchy, he said.

Arguelles, 61, is one of several bishops who have clout over the 122-member CBCP. One archbishop described him as someone who "is listened to and talks with a straight tongue."

Do not snub CBCP

Speaking for the CBCP, newly appointed spokesperson Msgr. Pedro Quitorio yesterday cautioned politicians against snubbing the latest CBCP pastoral statement.

"We really can't move forward if doubts about the initiative are not settled," Quitorio told the INQUIRER yesterday.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles has claimed the bishops have no business commenting on the issue. He said that amending the 1987 Charter was a purely "political exercise" beyond the realm of the Church leaders.

Quitorio scored the purported "double standard" that politicians applied in reacting to comments coming from religious leaders on political matters.

When the CBCP issued a pastoral letter refusing to join the clamor for Ms Arroyo's ouster last year, he noted that administration politicians praised the bishops for the position that they had taken. But once an opinion didn't suit their political interests, they were also quick to criticize the prelates, he pointed out.

"People should understand that we're talking about something higher here, not purely political issues," Quitorio said.

Opposition scored

House Deputy Minority Leader Rodolfo Antonino yesterday criticized Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Manuel Roxas II and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero for opposing administration efforts to institute constitutional reforms.

"It is blatantly hypocritical of them to fight for reforms when they were in the administration, but block the same reforms now that they are in the opposition," Antonino said in a statement.

"Their motive is clearly not for the country's interest," said the Nueva Ecija lawmaker.

Nograles yesterday said that Charter change was inevitable and unstoppable.

"Anti-Charter change advocates should now explain to the people why they are opposed to reform because in the end, only a referendum can properly determine their will," he said.

Likened to thieves

The leftist group Sanlakas likened the House majority's bid to campaign for Cha-cha over the Lenten holidays to a burglary.

"Again, like thieves, they muster for the advancement of their self-interest by taking advantage of the Holy Week's serenity," said Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza.

Briton wants to be nailed to cross on Good Friday

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A BRITON HAS signified his intention to be nailed to the cross on Good Friday in Barangay San Pedro Cutud, where crucifixion is a five-decade-old Lenten tradition.

Zoilo Castro, the village chief, said the Briton sent a Filipino representative on Saturday to make the arrangements. The coordinator did not identify his client.

As required of penitents, Castro said the Briton would be asked to sign a waiver before joining crucifixion rites on a hill in Purok Cuatro.

The waiver states that the village council will not be liable for any untoward incident that may occur in the course of the rites.

If the Brit's plan pushes through, he would be second Briton and the fourth foreigner to be nailed to the cross since the 1990s, according to Castro.

The first was a Belgian nun and the second, a Japanese.

Castro disapproved of having another Japanese join the rites because the last time a Japanese joined, he turned it into a spectacle.

"We don't want another Japanese. We did not file a formal complaint with the Japanese Embassy then because we did not want to strain diplomatic relations," Castro told reporters in Filipino.

As of yesterday, eight Filipino men had signed waivers. At least 14 penitents were expected to take to the cross.

Seeking God's favor for good health, salvation from poverty and reparation for sins are the reasons often cited for this form of sacrifice.

The village has readied three huge wooden crosses for the event, one of the highlights of the Via Crusis, a street play reenacting the life and passion of Christ.

Ruben Enaje, who holds the longest record in joining the crucifixion rites, takes to the cross for the 20th time this year.

The crucifixion tradition, began by itinerant healer Apung Temyong in the 1950s, is also practiced in nearby Barangay Sta. Lucia and San Juan, and in San Fernando starting 2005.

Castro said more than 500 flagellants, among them 12 young boys, would accompany the Via Crusis.

Green task force seizes hot logs in Surigao town

By Norman Bordadora

THE NATIONAL ANTI-ENVIRONMENT CRIME Task Force announced its existence over the weekend by confiscating some P16-million worth of illegally cut logs, some of which were reportedly found in a fishpond owned by a Surigao del Sur town mayor.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, who had headed task forces against smuggling and crime, said most of the 3,000-cubic meters of high-grade *lauan* logs were found floating on the Hinipaan River in Surigao del Sur while some logs were discovered hidden under palm fronds in a fishpond owned by Lingig Mayor Roberto Luna Jr.

"This confiscation of illegally cut logs signals the start of the relentless and unforgivable campaign of the government versus illegal logging and other environment crimes," Reyes said at a news conference yesterday.

Reyes, a former secretary of interior and local government, said Luna denied being involved in illegal logging but he would be investigated just the same.

"We will investigate the entire thing and make sure that we would not allow the rape of our environment," Reyes said.

New Environment Undersecretary Roy Kyamko, a retired general, led the weeklong surveillance that resulted in the successful Naectf operation on Sunday.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 11, 2006
Tuesday of Holy Week
Stanislaus

1st Reading: Is 49:1-6
Gospel: John 13:21-33, 36-38

Jesus was distressed in spirit and said plainly, "Truly, one of you will betray me." The disciples then looked at one another, wondering who he meant. One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining near Jesus; so Simon Peter signaled him to ask Jesus whom he meant.

And the disciple who was reclining near Jesus asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "I shall dip a piece of bread in the dish, and he to whom I give it, is the one."

So Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And as Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus then said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

None of the others reclining at table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. As he had the common purse, they may have thought that Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or, "Give something to the poor." Judas left as soon as he had eaten the bread. It was night.

When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. God will glorify him, and he will glorify him very soon.

My children, I am with you for only a little while; you will look for me, but, as I already told the Jews, so now I tell you: where I am going you cannot come.

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but afterwards you will." Peter said, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I am ready to give my life for you." Jesus answered, "To give your life for me! Truly, I tell you, the cock will not crow before you have denied me three times."

Commentary

Jesus is the sharp-edged sword (Word of God), a polished arrow sent to the heart of the people, the servant through whom God shows his glory. And he is the one who will bring union and communion to all by the strength of God borne in suffering, giving all so that all may see light and know what it means to be saved—to live in God. And this Jesus sits at table with his disciples and tells them that one will betray him, one will deny him viciously three times, and all will desert him. Nevertheless he shares his life, his body and blood with them and He will lay down his life for them and leave them for his Father. The end is near. Do we see yet who Jesus is—the beloved of God, inviting us to live and die with him for the glory of God?

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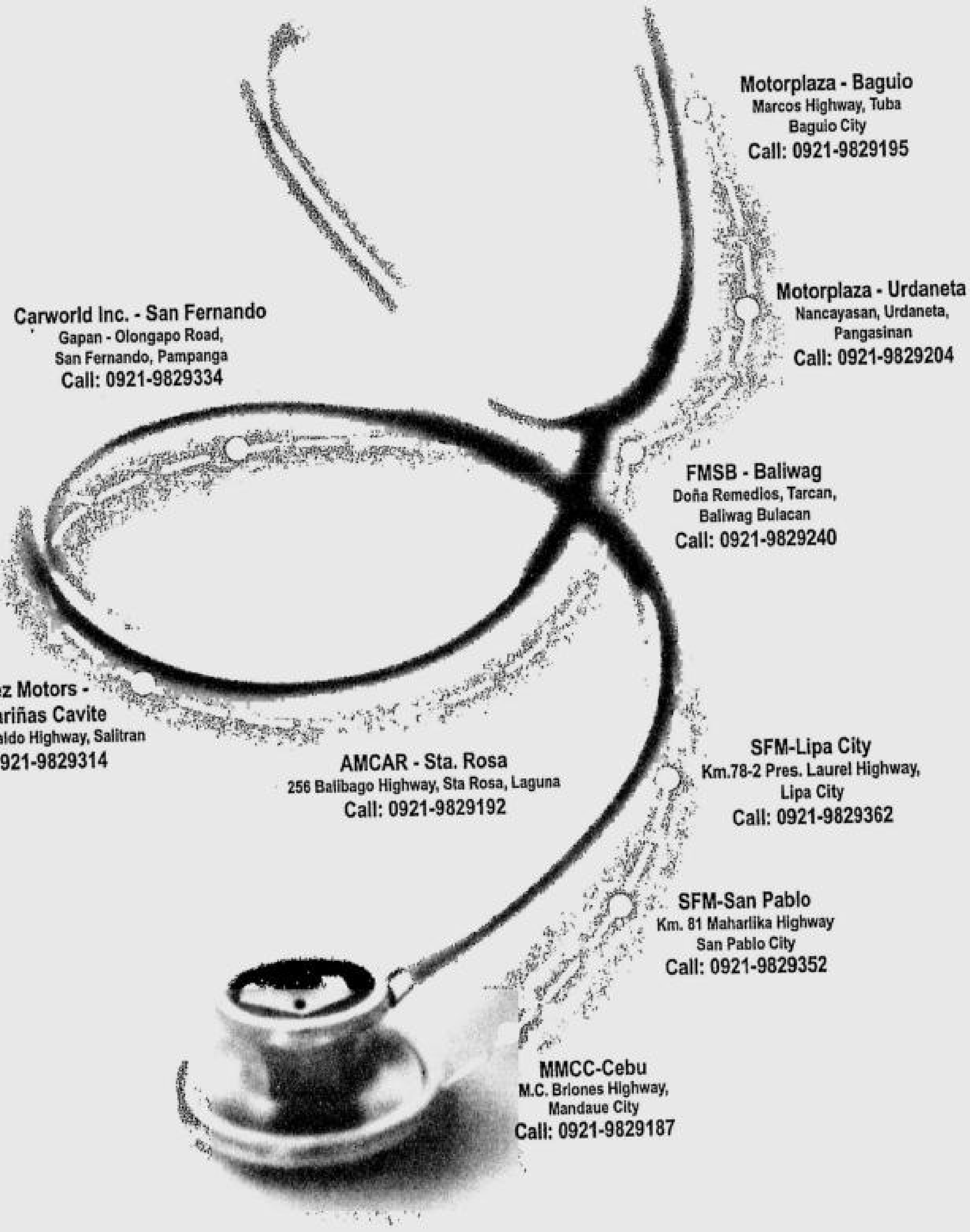

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Mayor's resort yields 5,000 illegal logs

LINGIG, SURIGAO DEL SUR—THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources seized at least 5,000 pieces of logs from a fishpond owned by this town's mayor.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes sent a "strike force" of the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTAF), a newly formed enforcement body, to conduct the raid.

The operation followed reports of large quantities of illegally harvested trees found in the premise of a private resort and pond owned by Mayor Roberto Luna Jr.

Samuel Danganan, director for operations of the NAECTAF, said the group conducted the raid following weeks of surveillance and data gathering.

During the raid, the NAECTAF team and four Army platoons led by Col. Joel Madarang, found some 5,000 logs floating in the shore of the resort and piled in the backyard pond of Luna.

Danganan said Luna failed to present documents that would show the logs were legally cut.

But Luna denied owning the logs that were found inside his property.

"I don't know and I was surprised why it was here," he told the INQUIRER.

The mayor was at the resort when the raid was conducted. He said he had been out of town since February.

But residents and some militiamen told the INQUIRER that the logs "surely belong to the mayor."

A militiaman, who requested anonymity, said the logs that were found along the shorelines were ready for towing by a certain buyer, known only through his company named Vicsmar, which is based in Cagayan de Oro City.

Lawyer Reynante Orceo, NAECTAF legal chief, said Luna will be charged with violation of PD 705 or the law on illegal logging.

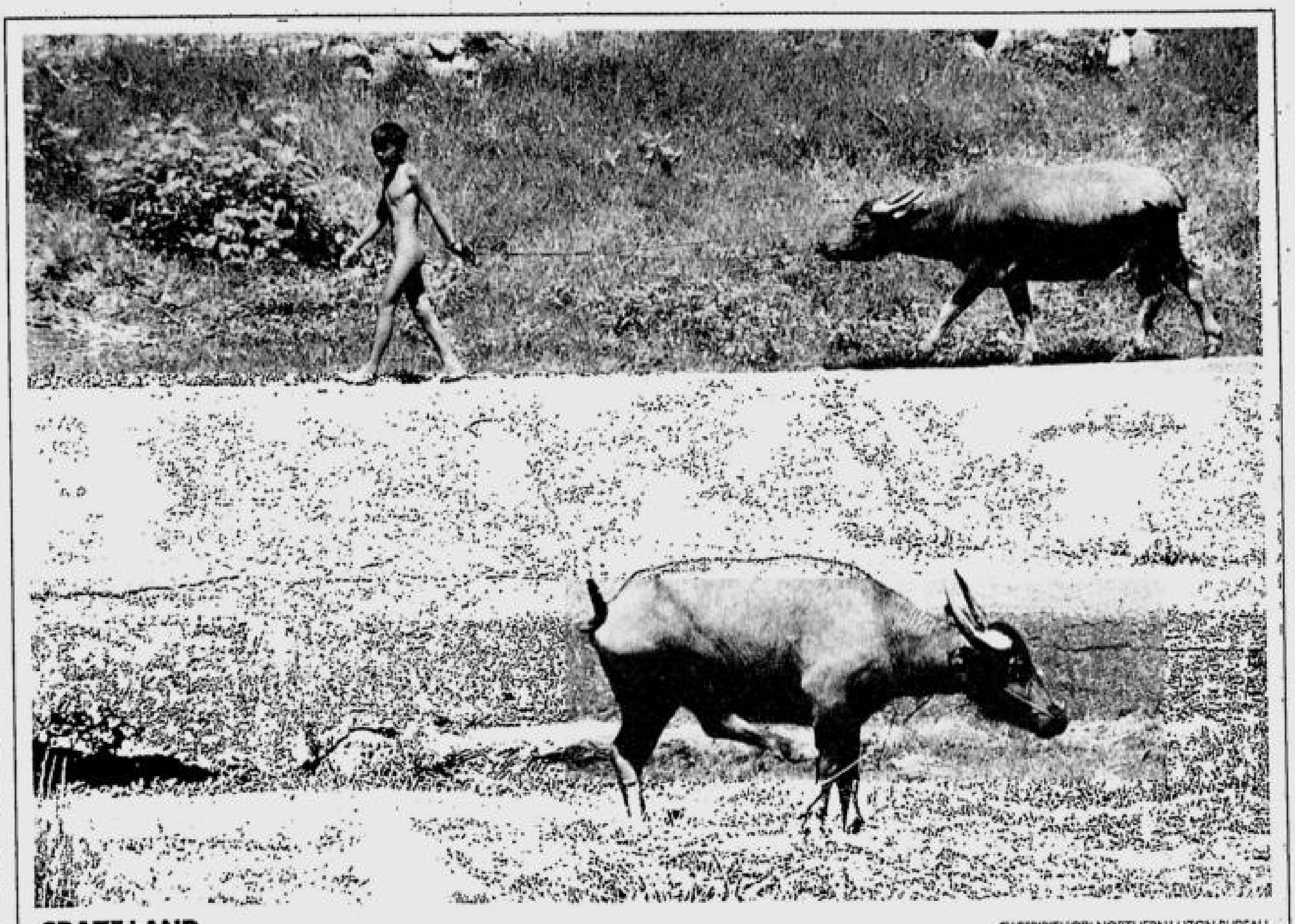
In a statement, Reyes said he has ordered the logs confiscated in favor of the government.

He estimated the haul to be worth P16 million.

"I am ordering the confiscation of these illegally cut logs—confiscation as against seizure—which makes the logs a property now of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Anybody who would want to claim it will have to do so be getting the logs from us," said Reyes' statement.

He said the raid marked the start of the DENR's unrelenting campaign against illegal logging.

He said he acknowledges the diligent intelligence work of the NAECTAF. *Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

GRAZE LAND

A boy in a village in Bontoc, Mt. Province tries to beat the heat of the dry season by going nude as he leads his family's carabao to pasture. Across the street is another carabao left by its owner near patches of grass.

Pampanga town's view of Judas won't change

A PAPER MACHÉ representing Judas, the way Kapampangans see him, is ready to be blasted into bits and pieces in an annual ritual in Minalin town. PHOTO FROM HAU CENTER FOR KAPAMPANGAN STUDIES

MINALIN, PAMPANGA—THE UNveiling of the 1,700 year-old-copy of the "Gospel of Judas" in Washington D.C. on Thursday and its depiction of the apostle as a good man caused no immediate changes in the way people in Pampanga, from where the Catholic faith was spread in Luzon by the Augustinians in 1571, treat Judas Iscariot.

On Easter Sunday right after the 10 a.m. Mass, the faithful are going ahead with their "Pakbung Hudas" tradition, according to Fr. Manny Sta. Maria, the parish priest in the town.

At the nearby plaza, they are going to witness a life-size papier maché of Judas, stuffed with firecrackers, to be blown off to bits and pieces in less than five minutes.

Painted red, its face in repentant mood and its right hand clutching a pouch of 30 coins, the image will be made to spin in a fast, circular motion before the pyrotechnics are exploded.

This local version of executing Judas used to see the older people in the audience shouting, "That suits you, you traitor!"

Except saying "Akagisnan mi na (We grew up to it)," old folks could not tell when this tradition exactly started. A clue perhaps is this: The Augustinians named the beautiful red-brick church after St. Monica, the mother of their founder, St. Augustine, a staunch theologian.

"First, I explained in my homilies that we should remove the desire to take revenge and take joy in seeing people like Judas being killed. We should regard the blasting of Judas as our way of blasting away the ugly and bad in our own selves," Sta. Maria said.

"By toning down the rites by not cursing Judas and seeing the whole thing in the perspective of repentance is like freeing ourselves from the revengeful attitude," he added. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Residents in 17 areas prone to landslides told to move

SORSOGON CITY—Residents of at least 17 villages in Bicol that have been classified as most landslide-prone have been asked to relocate as soon as possible, an official of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau said.

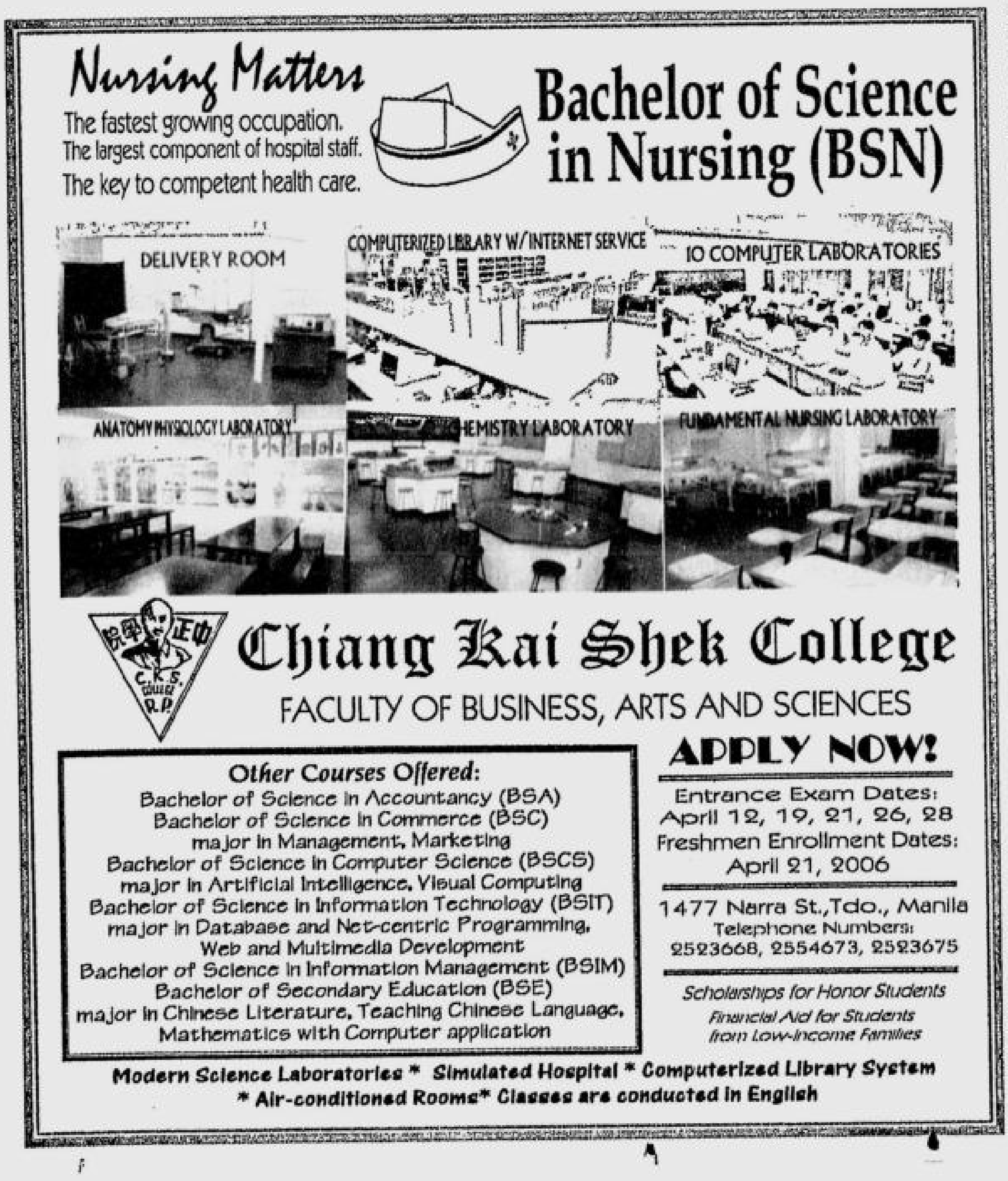
Arlene Dayao, supervising geologist of the MGB regional office, said landslides could strike there anytime, especially during heavy rain.

Dayao identified the villages as Bulao, Balete, Cawayan and Canayunan in Tinambac; Macad in Pasacao; and Sta. Cruz in Buhi, all in Camarines Sur; Barangays Calpi, Boyo and Inang Maharang in Manito; Bariw in Bacacay, and Mancao in Rapu-rapu in Albay;

Barangays Ginamlong, Milabiga and Inalmasinan in Caramoran; P. Vera in Viga; Agban in Baras; and San Pedro in Gigmoto, Catanduanes.

Local officials have already been informed of the dangers the communities are facing and have been advised to move the residents away, Dayao said.

The 17 villages are among the 82 barangays identified last year by the MGB as landslide-prone. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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ROUNDUP

Fire fighting woes tackled

SANTIAGO CITY—Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said the lack of fire trucks and fire fighting equipment in local governments has been hampering the job of the Bureau of Fire Protection in the country. Puno, who visited this city on Friday, said many mayors and fire fighting organizations in the country have been asking funds from the Department of Interior and Local Government to buy fire trucks and equipment. "There are daily requests to my office for fire trucks. I have to relay these [to President Macapagal-Arroyo] so that something could be done to answer the needs of the people," Puno said. He said of the 1,600 towns and cities, only 780 have fire trucks and stations.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

2 gunmen admit killings

DAVAO CITY—Two alleged hired killers admitted killing at least two Chinese-Filipino traders in Kidapawan City and tagged three policemen as their accomplices. North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said the suspects, Reynaldo Camus, 22, and Roland Cabals, 18, also named another businessman as the mastermind in the death of businessmen Roger Ong and Jose Morales. Ong was gunned down on March 9 in Kidapawan while Morales was killed last year. Piñol said the suspects claimed they were promised P150,000 each to kill Ong but were only given P5,000. North Cotabato police director Senior Supt. Federico Dulay said the three policemen—SPO4 Reynaldo Mamburam, SPO4 Ignacio Rinsulat and PO3 Edwin Pacana—had been restricted to camp pending investigation.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 Chinoys abducted

PARANG, Maguindanao—Armed men, allegedly led by a relative of a local politician, abducted two people, including a Chinese-Filipino businessman from Valencia City in Bukidnon, on Thursday. Chief Supt. Akmad Mamalinta, police chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, on Saturday said Michael Dy and his employee Evelyn de la Cruz were on their way home with an escort and a driver after collecting debts in Wao when snatched at gunpoint. A crisis committee, led by Lanao del Sur police director Supt. Palawan Ampatua, had been formed to ensure the safe release of the victims, he said.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Solcom renovates building

MALINIS NA SIR!

LEGAZPI CITY—The Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command (Solcom) has refurbished its liaison office building inside Camp Gen. Simeon Ola here. Solcom officials, headed by Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., led in the blessing of the newly renovated and painted building on Friday. In a press conference after the blessing rites, Cabuay reported that the government was winning the insurgency in the Bicol Region with 15 New People's Army rebels killed and four others captured. He said the military also confiscated 23 high-powered firearms.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

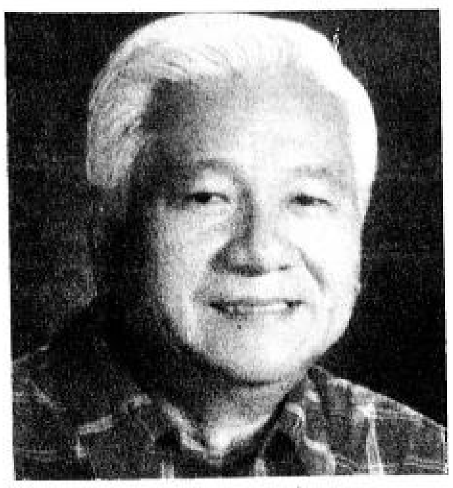
4 rebs slain in clash

BULAN, Sorsogon—Four members of the New People's Army, including two women, were killed in a clash with government forces in Barangay Sigad here Sunday. SPO1 Recto Valeriano, 509th Provincial Police Mobile Group (PPMG) information officer, identified one of those killed as Juliet Golimlim alias Ka Maan, 24, a resident of Barangay San Juan Daan and said to be the leader of the 16-man rebel group. Two from the government forces were also wounded but they were now out of danger. Valeriano said the day after the clash, residents of the village reported seeing three bodies, one of them belonging to a woman, with gunshot wounds.

Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Capiz high school reunion

GRADUATES of the Capiz National High School batch of 1966 will hold a reunion on April 16 at the Capiz National High School covered gym in Roxas City. Orly Bigkas Lumawag, organizing committee chair, said there would be a whole day program to recognize outstanding alumni and hold elections for officers. Interested members of the class may call Raul Relano at 0917-7260265.



MALIKSI: Let Caviteños decide

Gov dares foe: Face me in 2007 polls

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—SAYING THEIR constituents were the final arbiters, beleaguered Cavite Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi yesterday challenged Vice Gov. Juanito Victor Remulla to a showdown in next year's local elections to settle their differences and end the bickering at the provincial capitol.

Apparently stung by corruption charges thrown against him, Maliksi said Remulla should stop his "dirty politicking" and focus on delivering services to the Caviteños.

"I actually want to settle this leadership issue in Cavite as soon as possible. It will be better if he (Remulla) face me in (next year's elections) so we can resolve this issue once and for all," Maliksi told the INQUIRER in an interview at his office.

"After all, it is the people who should really decide on this matter because they are the most affected by these kinds of problems," he added.

Remulla, however, turned down the challenge of his family's erstwhile political ally and said it was far more important for Maliksi to answer the charges against him than to think of the coming elections.

"The next elections are still far away. Before he even thinks of facing me, he must face the charges against him. I'm not important in this. What is important is the determination if there was indeed a crime committed," Remulla said in a telephone interview.

Ombudsman orders immediate suspension of Cavite governor

JOHNVIC REMULLA: Answer charges

By Nelson F. Flores

OMBUDSMAN MERCEDITAS GUTIERREZ ordered the suspension of Cavite Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi yesterday, after the Court of Appeals lifted a preliminary injunction that prevented his suspension earlier.

Gutierrez, in a two-page memorandum, noted that the court had rejected Maliksi's petition for an extension of the injunction and directed the deputy Ombudsman for Luzon, Victor Fernandez, to effect the governor's suspension.

Fernandez had ordered Maliksi suspended for six months last August after Cavite Vice Gov. Juanito Victor Remulla, charged him with abuse of authority and misconduct for allegedly buying 7,500 sacks of rice worth P7.5 million ostensibly for indigent Caviteños without proper bidding as required by law.

Fernandez held at the time that the records presented by Remulla "establish that the evidence against respondent (Maliksi) is strong." He also cited a Commission on Audit report that the purchase was not awarded to the National Food Authority although it had adequate supplies to meet the Cavite government's needs.

Records obtained by the Ombudsman showed that on Oct. 5, 2004, Maliksi accomplished a purchase order for 7,500 sacks of rice in favor of Capitol City Marketing even without a prior contract. The records also showed that Maliksi had eight contracts with CCM, which issued eight invoices without specifying the rice variety that was required.

On Oct. 15, Maliksi and provincial treasurer Salome Landas issued eight checks in favor of CCM.

Maliksi, "as an after thought," then issued a Certificate of Emergency Purchase and a certificate stating that the "rice were distributed even without inspection because the goods were badly needed by the indigent families of the different barangays of the municipalities and cities of Cavite," the Ombudsman said.

In his defense, Maliksi asserted that no delivery receipts were issued by CCM and that he never acknowledged receiving the rice.

Abalos: People can still take back signatures

By Leila B. Salaverria

PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THEY WERE misled into signing a petition to amend the Constitution and shift to a unicameral parliamentary system can withdraw their signatures for as long as these have not yet been verified, Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos said yesterday.

There would be no liability for the people who would take back their signatures, Abalos said. However, he added, once verified, these signatures can no longer be recalled.

Abalos made the comments at the Kapihan sa Manila forum, where Sen. Rodolfo Biazon questioned the signature-gathering.

Biazon said he has spoken with people in Bataan who told him that they did not understand the proposal for Charter change and signed the document because their mayor told them to. He also noted claims that people had been paid to sign the petition.

"The integrity of the gathering is already in question," Biazon said.

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OPINION

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Well-documented scam

EDITORIAL

OFFICIALLY, IT WAS A SCAM. THE COMMISSION on Audit's impressive final report on the Department of Agriculture's Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA, Golden Bountiful Harvest) rice program, dated March 31 and submitted to the Senate, enumerates why.

First, COA auditors said there was "no system at all in the distribution of the fertilizers to establish accountability," resulting in "a hazy accountability for the government funds." The list of proponents that was attached to the Department of Budget and Management's Special Allotment Release Order (Saro) for P728 million was different from the list in the eventual allocation of the funds. And some proponents also received more than was than originally allocated under the DBM list. In other words, while an official list was approved by the DBM, Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante of the Department of Agriculture was given the latitude to manipulate the list.

The manipulation of the list at the DA level led to some surprising fertilizer fund allocations. They included two Metro Manila congressmen, three congressmen and a mayor in the Ilocos Region, two governors in Cagayan Valley and a P5 million allocation for Pampanga that didn't even have a named proponent. The COA also noted that at least 26 "proponents" were included in the DBM list but did not receive fertilizer funds, while six lawmakers received additional funds of P13 million. Furthermore, the COA report suggests that some of the projects for which the fertilizer funds were to be used already had allocations in the 2004 budget under the lawmakers' pork barrel or Priority Development Assistance Fund. "The (local government units) had, likewise, separate appropriations for their own development projects," the report said.

Besides the rank favoritism and obvious patronage that the manipulation of the proponent's list shows, the COA report said DA officials bought foliar and organic liquid fertilizers from "so-called exclusive distributors" although the item was "readily available in the open market." The fertilizer, bought from a favored few was bought at an extravagantly inflated price. How inflated? By 682 percent, or an overprice of P128 million. "Moreover, three brands of fertilizers submitted for tests revealed chemical compositions that fell short of representations printed on their labels," the COA report noted. So, the fertilizer was bought from favorites at ridiculously high prices and, in some cases, was of inferior quality.

Furthermore, for the purposes of the fertilizer purchases, what was bought was not the recommended kind of fertilizer at all. The DA's own Bureau of Soil and Water Management had not recommend the use of foliar fertilizers under its "Tipid Abono Bawas Gastos, Saganang Ani (Reduced Fertilizer, Less Cost, Bountiful Harvest) Program."

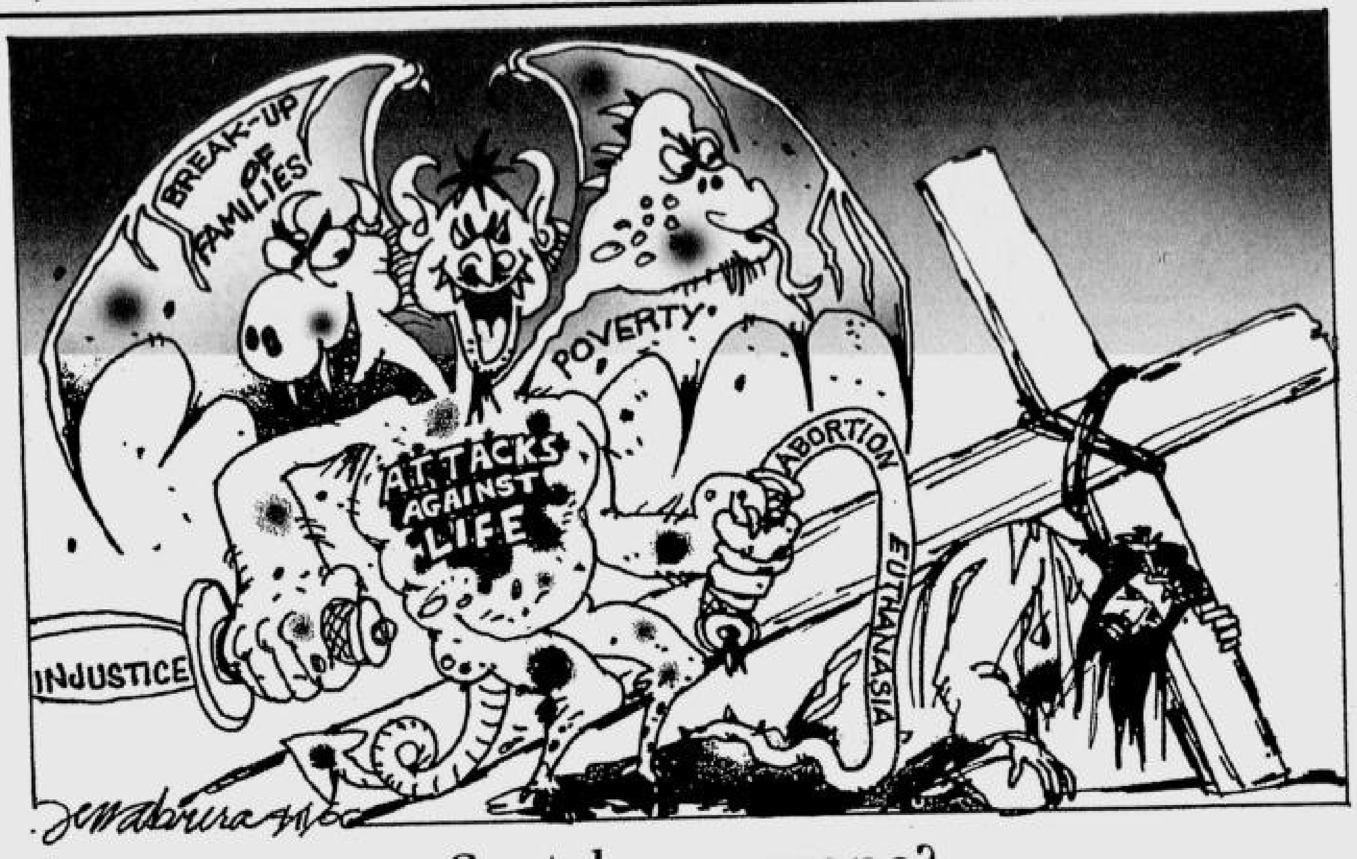
The whole thing is as dirty as a scam can get, involving a large cast populated by officials from Malacañang Palace, the Department of Agriculture, the House of Representatives, local governments, and the private sector. And there's still the ongoing determination of whether or not funds from the portion of the Marcos wealth recovered by the government were illegally used in the fertilizer scam.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles, some weeks back, denounced Senate President Franklin Drilon for revealing the direction COA investigations was going. Premature and unfair, Nograles called it.

That may be so, but if the report released by COA is a hint of things to come, what may have been premature might just become more timely.

Since the Arroyo administration regularly likes to trumpet that its actions enjoy the presumption of regularity, now that it's fertilizer purchasing and distribution scheme's been shown to be highly irregular, what happens next?

The COA wants the DA to help push forward the investigation under the auspices of the Office of the Ombudsman. But this is a case that involves dozens of DA officials—and a former official who is now in the private sector and conveniently out of the reach of the Senate which has issued a subpoena so he can testify at its hearings. Can the political or even legal will be summoned to prosecute a case that stinks to high heaven? Given the personalities involved, it would surprise many people if this case gets anywhere.



Crutches, anyone?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IS THIS A NATION ON CRUTCHES?

Local governments hobble on Internal Revenue Allotments from "Imperial Manila," shoving their expanded powers to raise taxes under the carpet. The military leans on hand-me-downs from the United States. And many families survive on what their "best and brightest" can scrape up from their earnings as overseas workers.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye pooh-poohs an Asian Development Bank warning that over-dependence on migrant remittances, consumption and sluggish investments were stunting potentials to dent poverty and joblessness.

That scoffing doesn't curb a daily exodus of almost 3,000 workers—from pilots, teachers, doctors to engineers. They signal "the loss of knowledge and high social costs," the bank said.

Parallel studies show that migration has shut out the country's poorer regions. And this exclusion will embed further already serious disparities. Income of the richest 10 percent of Filipinos is 20 times the share of the dirt poor 10 percent.

After Mexicans and Indians, Filipinos are the third largest group of migrants who send money home. Eight out of every 10 OFWs remit funds regularly, says the ADB study , "Enhancing Efficiency of OFW Remittances."

Average monthly remittance was $340. In today's appreciating peso, that comes up to P17,340 monthly. Most is spent for food, school, medicine, TV, cell phones, motorcycles, etc. "Allocations for fiestas and other special occasions were observed."

"Remittances have been used mainly for excessive consumption," the study notes. Little has gone to "creating productive capacity."

Like the widow's mite, these funds add up. The Bangko Sentral documented "official remittances" at $7.6 billion in 2003 and $10 billion last year.

A World Bank case study, however, tallied what's funneled via the *padala* system, run by informal money remitters. It found actual inflow crested somewhere between $14 and $21 billion in 2002. This much higher estimate is also reflected in ADB studies.

What happens in a nation when 1 out of 10 of population leave for jobs abroad?

The money that migrants remit has a strong impact on poverty reduction, a 74-country study by the World Bank found. "A 10 percent increase of international migrants, in a country's population, (trims) the share of people living in poverty by 1.9 percent."

Wait. Policy Research Working Paper No. 3179 has more. "On average, a 10 percent increase in the share of international migrants in a country's gross domestic product" whittles the number of indigents by 1.6 percent.

But there's a big fly in this ointment. "These broad cross-country conclusions may not hold up" here.

"The poorer segment of Philippine society has been largely excluded from the opportunities provided by migration," asserts "Poverty in the Philippines," an ADB monograph. "Regions with the highest levels of poverty have the lowest proportions of OFWs."

Bicol and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, plus Central Mindanao, have consistently been the three poorest regions since 1994. In the ARMM, 68 out of every 100 families are poor. Poverty incidence in Metro Manila, in contrast, is 8.7 percent.

The ADB's conclusions are anchored on findings that Dr. S. Go presented earlier before the Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network in Fiji. Better-off families tend to receive larger slabs of OFW income, Go noted. These families are mostly clustered in cities, not in the boondocks where penury is pervasive.

The fact is, there "were four million more poor individuals in 2000 than in 1985," the ADB monograph notes. There's been very little overall change in rural poverty. "Nearly half of families remain income poor."

"International migration may actually exacerbate the inequality problem in the Philippines," Go cautions. Hence, it is urgent to craft "policies that channel remittances into more productive investments to fuel pro-poor policies."

We have, however, a shoddy track record of dissipating financial windfalls. There was rhetoric of creating perpetual trusts for World War II damage payments by the US and Japanese war reparations. Little came of that. Most were frittered away in consumption. And piranhas had a field day.

Both the administration and the opposition haven't faced up to the social costs of nearly 10 percent of the population working abroad. "Families are often apart for long periods of time and social capital can break down".

Remittances, nonetheless, offer a "predictable flow of more than $7 billion yearly," the ADB points out. "There exist opportunities to scrutinize these flows for development initiatives."

Some preliminary thought has been given to measures that could tap OFW funds more usefully. These range from opening remittance windows in Philippine banks in host countries with large OFW concentrations to tax incentives for remittances investments.

"Mobile telephone operators introduced programs that allow OFWs to transfer value by means of text-messaging to beneficiaries in the Philippines. ADB believes (this can) reduce the costs of remittances. It is also a precedent for other ... countries."

"Two thirds of OFWs originate from the provinces... Rural and thrift banks, cooperatives and micro-finance institutions could play a greater role."

But precious little hands-on work in getting a policy framework in place has been done so far. The government settles for cheaper OFW hero rhetoric. Politicians prefer their crutches of constitution tampering or ouster of the regime.

Hiyâ

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I REMEMBER THAT WE SPENT A GREAT deal of time in school discussing "*hiyâ*," a cultural trait that had firm roots in this country. It was a fairly complex concept, something that wasn't so easy to pin down. The word itself had no direct English equivalent.

At the negative end, *hiyâ* meant shame or embarrassment. It meant not doing something the community would find wrong for fear of making oneself a social outcast. Or, worse, for fear of giving the family a bad name, the sins of the fathers, and mothers, being visited upon the children.

At the positive end, the word also meant quite paradoxically pride, dignity and self-respect. It was allied with other words, many of them Spanish (which easily revealed their provenance), like "*palabra de honor*," "*amor propio*" and "*delicadeza*." Which translate roughly as word of honor, self-worth or self-respect, and sense of propriety. *Hiyâ* meant doing as one promised, one's troth being inviolable, its highest expression being a verbal contract with another person which carried as much ironclad guarantees, if not more so, as a written one. It meant holding oneself in such high esteem one would not think to debase oneself by behaving shamefully. It meant having a sense of propriety, an internal or moral compulsion, independently of external laws with their threats of punishment, to do the right thing.

I remembered all this in light of people saying, shortly after Thaksin Shinawatra resigned as prime minister of Thailand, that unfortunately for us we do not have a King Bhumibol in this country. This was said in part by GMA's defenders, who went on to exult that we are not a monarchy. But this was also said more thoughtfully by independent observers, who rued the fact that we did not have a symbol of tradition and nobility (in more ways than one) that was universally looked up to the way Thailand did. We did not have a powerful living gatekeeper or caretaker of the country's highest values that rose beyond politics and could bend politics to his—and ultimately the people's—will.

Well, true enough we do not have a King Bhumibol among us, an external or corporeal figure that symbolizes the best that a people can be, that can be a unifying force driving us to rise above pettiness and self-interest. But I don't know that we need one. In the past at least, we had something comparable to it, even if it was not external or corporeal. We had a sense of shame. We had a sense of pride. We had a sense of *hiyâ*.

Cultural valuations are just as real, palpable and compelling, if not more so, as authority figures or statute books. As Japan and South Korea show in extreme form, a sense of honor ingrained from birth can be as powerful as imperial fiat, public officials who figure in scandals abruptly deciding to end their tenure in public office, and sometimes even on earth. Authority figures and laws, in fact, are as good or enforceable only as people share the values and beliefs that sustain them. It's the invisible that sustains the visible.

Our problem today is not so much that we do not have a King Bhumibol who can force a leader to listen to reason, it is that we no longer seem to have the local equivalent of King Bhumibol, which is a powerful sense of *hiyâ*, to force someone who stole the vote to give it back. What is King Bhumibol but the visible expression of Thailand's cherished values? What is *hiyâ* but the invisible expression of this country's most cherished values?

What has happened is that someone who has absolutely no shred of *hiyâ* has gone past even Marcos in upping the ante on shameless behavior. GMA owed the presidency to an act of people power, which bound her by the deepest obligations of *hiyâ* to defend democracy to the death. She has repaid it by issuing PP 1017 and scuttling rallies, including those led by Cory, the one person other than Jaime Cardinal Sin, who helped her come to power. What can one say? *Walang hiyâ talaga. Walanghiyâ talaga.* Shamelessness has become the hallmark of today's rule, which has contaminated everyone that has come into contact with it faster and more virulently than leprosy.

But far more importantly, which is the one thing I find truly frightening, the public itself is slowly losing the value, or virtue, of *hiyâ*. That is so in both in the negative and positive sense of the word, in both the sense of *hiyâ* as a feeling of shame and as a feeling of self-respect. Marcos, of course, was the first to up the ante on shameless behavior, but the public at least held him in universal revulsion notwithstanding that for much of martial law, they could do little about it.

Today, well, the revulsion is still there—you see that in surveys that say 65 percent of the population want GMA to disappear from the face of the earth and 36 percent of them do not mind seeing her excised by a coup as against 35 percent who do and 29 percent who do not give a damn one way or the other. But you also have a section of the middle class, and a fairly articulate one, that doesn't mind being ruled by an unelected president on the ground that we have no alternative, beggars cannot be choosers.

No, we do not need to install a King Bhumibol to compel our leaders to do the right thing, or, heaven forbid, hold yet another Cha-cha to shift from presidential to parliamentary to monarchial. We need only dredge up our sense of shame and pride, our collective sense of *hiyâ*, which we've allowed to slip into the sewer.

You wonder why Thailand is a tiger economy and we are a rodent one? Ask yourself: Have you ever known a people that had neither shame nor pride to have advanced in life?

But that's what we're becoming, if we have not done so already. A nation that's *walang hiyâ*, a nation of *walanghiyâ*.

A sad development

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTAtives are reported to have "padded" their pork barrel allocations by P4.7 billion, or an additional P20 million for each member, prior to approving the P1-trillion 2006 budget. This amount is referred to as the "EVAT dividend" for the House members, who were most cooperative in passing controversial revenue measures. House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles was quoted as saying that with the billions in additional revenues from EVAT and other tax measures, "What would they do with all that money?" Nograles opined that part of it "should be returned to the people who pay (those taxes)." After the House move, it has been speculated that the Senate would follow suit and increase the senators' individual pork barrel of P120 million.

This is a sad development.

* * *

I have no quarrel with returning part of the taxes to the people who pay them, but the problem of coursing these through the members of Congress is that there is so much frivolous spending, e.g., on basketball courts, waiting sheds and the like. At times, as COA reports have proved, some of it goes to highly questionable expenditures such as family-owned construction projects. What this country needs right now is to invest these added revenues in projects that are truly needed and which would impact the most on the people's lives, like more classrooms, better health facilities, housing programs, micro-finance lending, etc.

Cecile Alvarez and I recently invited to our dzRH show Raul Lejano, a Filipino professor at the department of planning, policy and design of the School of Social Ecology of the University of California in Irvine. Lejano's field of interest includes looking at how natural disasters, such as the mud-slides of Guinsaugon and the landslides in Aurora and Quezon, could be mitigated by sensible government policies and planning. He noted the failure of the government to finish a hazard map of the country. He opined that if only 80 percent of the legislators' pork barrel could be invested in medium and long-term planning for disasters in this disaster-prone country, it would go a long way toward protecting people's lives and welfare.

I submit that the EVAT funds could also go into acquiring more cloud-seeding planes, in anticipation of El Niño's devastation, or outfitting more disaster emergency teams in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Right now, there's only one makeshift cloud-seeder which is so primitive and dangerous for the crew, and only one disaster team in the whole AFP! One could go on with meaningful ways to spend increased revenues.

* * *

There appears to be truth to the accusation that the Senate is very fond of conducting investigations but forgets its primary duty of making laws. Take the Garci investigation, which is allegedly an election-related scandal. Interestingly, it was channeled principally to national defense chaired by opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, when it has nothing to do with national defense (the lead committee should be electoral reforms and constitutional amendments). The Garci investigation has been going on for over a year now, with the Senate holding 11 or 12 hearings, but the defense committee has not come out with a report, or even a partial one. Its members bask in the full coverage of the media, with repetitious questions aired continuously.

* * *

Citizens are now asking when the Biazon committee will come out with a report. When will the investigation come to an end? Will there ever be a closure? So far, there's been none, and the rumor is that the defense committee will just keep on investigating to keep the issue alive. I call such moves a "striptease act" while one lawyer likened it to a court holding a perpetual "vista" without coming to a decision. At least, in the House, the three committees that conducted hearings on the Garci tape for seven months come out with their report, whether one agrees or disagrees with it.

The problem with issuing a committee report is that it has to be signed by all the committee members. Moreover, it can be scrutinized by the public and questioned even by the committee members. But the Senate has no choice but to bring this issue to a close, as the public is already concluding that its agenda is merely to conduct hearings in aid of political persecution or the senators' reelection.

* * *

Among our provinces, Bohol, famed for its white sand beaches and other natural wonders, is perhaps unique in its artistic and cultural ferment, and the Boholanos are proud of it. On July 20-31, an estimated 10,000 Boholanos from all over the world will once again join their *kababayan* in Tagbilaran for a festive homecoming called "Tigum Bol-anon Sa Tibuok Kalibutan" (literally, a Gathering of Boholanos from all around the world). The TBTK coincides with the two-week Sandugo Festival in Bohol, which began basically as a street-dancing celebration akin to Cebu's "Sinulog" and Iloilo's "Dinagyang" whose highlight is the re-enactment of the 1565 blood compact between Sikatuna and Miguel Lopez de Legaspi.

TBTK will feature various cultural activities such as concerts, culinary trips and arts and crafts exhibits, and just about everything that appeals to a Boholano's heart, including the Miss and Mrs. Bohol International beauty tilt.

TBTK, initiated in 1999 and held once every three years, is perhaps the only successful global reunion of a province today. It owes its success primarily to the Bol-anon's psyche, which prides in the fact that no matter where fate takes him, he will always have this "sense of province," as the dynamic TBTK '06 chair, Elizabeth "Betty" Garcia puts it. Garcia is a New Jersey-based wife and mother of two children and works as a staff nurse in a hospital in Manhattan.

Is the UN ready for a woman?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

FOLLOWING THE PRACTICE OF "REGIONAL rotation" in the choice of secretary general of the United Nations, it's now supposedly Asia's "turn" to have a representative chosen as head of the global body, to take the place of Kofi Annan. But no one, apparently, has given much thought that it might also be a woman's turn.

Jessica Neuwirth of Equality Now, in a commentary published in the Washington Post, contends that this "premier world organization" is still "missing the point" that many voters have since grasped in countries like Germany, Jamaica, Liberia, Chile, New Zealand (as well as the Philippines): "that women, too can serve as leaders at the highest level."

"In the 60 years since the United Nations was founded, no woman has served as secretary general," Neuwirth reminds. "And despite the body's stated goal of achieving gender parity within the system by the year 2000, women remain grossly underrepresented. The numbers are embarrassing: Only 16 percent of undersecretaries general are women."

It's not as if there is a lack of qualified candidates for the post. If the next UN secretary general is supposed to hail from Asia, Neuwirth notes, there are many qualified Asian women, with experience in government and even within the UN system, although none of them seems to be on the current list of candidates.

One of the "candidates" is a Filipina, Leticia Ramos Shahani, who has not only served in the Philippine Senate but has also served as UN assistant secretary general in the 1980s. (Among women's groups, she is best remembered as having served as secretary general of the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya.)

Other qualified Asian women include Japan's Sadako Ogata who served as UN high commissioner for refugees, Pakistan's Nafis Sadik who served as executive director of the UN Population Fund, even Hong Kong's Anson Chan who has served "with distinction" as head of the territory's civil service.

* * *

OUTSIDE of Asia, other women's names have often been mentioned for possible election as UN secretary general.

Neuwirth mentions UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand, President Taria Halonen of Finland and President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia who, Neuwirth says, has expressed interest in the post of secretary general.

"After serving as prime minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland held the post of director general of the World Health Organization," adds Neuwirth. Navanethem Pillay, who now serves as a judge on the International Criminal Court, served previously for four years as president of the UN Rwanda Tribunal.

The point, says Neuwirth, is that "there are women qualified for the post. The Security Council has only to look for them."

The trouble, says Neuwirth, is that the selection process for the most senior official of the United Nations is "cloaked in secrecy and devoid of formal procedure ... (doing) a great disservice to any notion of transparency or democracy." A candidate needs to secure a majority vote of the Security Council and avoid a veto by any of the five permanent members, the so-called P5: China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States.

* * *

"WHO the candidates are is often as much of a mystery as how they are considered, a subject of intrigue and much speculation by the media," Neuwirth says. "This process works to keep many qualified candidates—especially qualified women—from getting due consideration."

What women need to do, actually, is only to hold the UN itself—and all the member-governments—to their word. "In 1995, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, governments called for the development of 'mechanisms to nominate women candidates for appointment to senior posts in the United Nations,'" notes Neuwirth. "More than 10 years later, no such mechanism has been developed for nomination to the most senior post."

Kofi Annan himself holds a dismal record when it comes to promoting women up the ladder of seniority and responsibility in the UN. "Since 2004 there has been a decrease in the percentage of women serving at the management level of his staff. He has just replaced the first female deputy secretary general with a man, and there are no women among the candidates on his short list for executive director of the UN Environment Program."

Speaking on the occasion of International Women's Day, Annan noted that the role of women in decision making is "central to the advancement of women around the world, and to the progress of humankind as a whole," expressing the view that "the world is ready for a woman secretary general." Says Neuwirth: "The secretary-general is right—we are ready and waiting."

* * *

EVERYONE who wants to bring the spiritual reflection occasioned by the Holy Week to a whole different level is invited to listen to Sr. Fidelis Estrada of the Assumption Sisters on "A Dialogue of Faith and Love (A Talk on Interrreligious Dialogue and Spirituality)." The talk will be held at 4 p.m., April 23, Sunday at the Theosophical Society Headquarters, 1 Iba corner Padre Florentino Sts., Mayon, Quezon City (near the Welcome Rotunda).

Sister Fidelis used to head the Assumption campus in San Lorenzo, after which she went to Africa to work for interfaith dialogue among Christian groups and Muslims. Now based in Iloilo, Sr. Fidelis, a vegetarian, practices pranic healing and meditation and seeks dialogue with members of various faiths to find "authentic spirituality free of sectarian bias and hostility."

The Theosophical Society promotes Universal Brotherhood and encourages the comparative study of different religions.

Mandatory service

COMMENTARY

Cielito C. Goño
Institute on Church and Social Issues

AT A BUS STOP IN BRIGHTON, SOMEONE WAS singing quite audibly in English, with a strong Tagalog accent. I turned to see who it was. He smiled.

"I'm sorry but I have to sing my sadness away today," he said with disarming candor.

"*Pilipino po kayo?*" I asked.

He seemed cheerfully surprised. We got on the bus, and for four miles—until I got off at my university—he could not stop telling me about his life.

He said his wife had migrated to the United Kingdom some years back, as a nurse. He and the children moved only recently to reunite with her. He was a mechanic for a shipping company in the Philippines but was now shelving merchandise at the local Boots store in Lewes. He and his wife could never dream of earning the same kind of money back home to support their kids, but how it grieved him that his marriage did not seem to be surviving the strain of physical separation that had come before the reunion.

I never saw him again after that, but I have not forgotten the great internal conflict—about whether his wife's job and paychecks were worth their marriage—I saw in him. And the memory of that encounter now makes me think of what migration decisions such as theirs may be doing to the health systems of countries like the Philippines.

Definitely, there are costs and benefits to families, health systems and economies. Of course, the remittances from overseas workers benefit the economies, but since that money is plowed back into health systems, there is an uncompensated extraction from the country's health service capability.

The pay scales in hospitals in developed countries are simply too high for health facilities in poor countries to compete with. The Philippines' health system, which depends on its skilled health workforce, is therefore vulnerable to hospital manning policies in rich nations. These recruitment policies in turn are driven by the rising demand for and falling supply of skilled health workers in these populations. As life spans lengthen and birth rates decline, the proportion of their elderly to their total population grows, but the type of healthcare requirements that increases with this demographic trend is not being met with the volume of health personnel in their work forces. For them, the easy solution is to recruit abroad. For governments that heavily subsidize medical training, importing the health manpower of other countries might actually result in savings as well.

The impact of the low supply of trained health professionals is particularly severe for health indicators of rural poverty. Doctors and nurses typically prefer not only to work abroad rather than in the Philippines, but also, within the Philippines (as in most countries), in urban rather than rural areas. Even when the national population is more or less evenly divided between rural and urban areas, according to the National Demographic and Health Survey of 2003, 48 percent of deliveries in urban areas were assisted by doctors, while merely 19 percent of births in rural areas were assisted by physicians.

The assistance of skilled health professionals during births is considered not only a good indicator of access to health services, but also a factor that depresses infant and maternal mortality rates. This is because this assistance is usually a good proxy variable for sanitation, competence in identifying and addressing maternal and foetal complications, and the capability of transferring mothers and infants to specialty centers when required.

Arguably, there is a persistently skewed distribution of skilled health professionals that is being aggravated by migration patterns. Part of the solution is to increase the production of doctors and nurses in the Philippines. This would increase the size of the skilled health workforce. However, it would not affect their geographic distribution.

If the objective is to increase skilled health service delivery in underserved rural areas, a policy option is a law on mandatory service for health professionals. Such a law would require doctors and nurses to serve in the Philippines for a fixed period after graduation, with shorter periods required of those who elect to work in the most underserved areas. This way, doctors and nurses who wish to leave for overseas employment as soon as possible, would find an incentive for choosing to work in underserved locations.

The Philippine government could require at least the graduates of publicly funded schools and universities, although this would not match the enormity of the need. It does not have to ask for what seems to be a three-year going rate for mandatory health service elsewhere in the region. Even one to two years of required service would make a huge difference, especially if the measure is matched with increased production of skilled health professionals. The length of service to the poorest and most underserved areas could be as short as 10 months to a year, in order to more strongly attract new graduates who want to work overseas or specialize as soon as possible after graduation.

Surely, there are disadvantages to such a policy as well. It would delay early specialization, which is what some medicine and nursing graduates want. It would temporarily limit the geographic mobility of new graduates of nursing and medicine. It would delay foreign currency incomes for those who are gunning for overseas employment. The national budget for health would have to be increased. However, considering the consequences on poverty and inequity in health in the Philippines, mandatory service for doctors and nurses could be the right risk to take.

Falling star

YOUNG BLOOD

Anton Dominic Arrazola

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

AS A CHILD, I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT FALLING STARS were God's sign that He remembered the lonely. To me, they were flares sent down from heaven to remind those who were alone that they still had hope of being rescued from their sad fate.

The funny thing was that until then, the closest I had come to seeing a falling star was in the movies and in the cartoons I used to watch. I took this as a sign that God considered me strong and that I was indestructible and beyond being hurt by sorrow and pain.

I was wrong. When I was 17, I saw a real falling star.

My mother had to leave for the United States when I was in fifth grade because our house had been foreclosed by the bank. The irony of this tragedy was that my mother owned our house but it was my father who had mortgaged it. My father was an alcoholic whose vice made our lives harder than it should have been.

Before she left, I used to sleep beside my mother. I became her confidant. The things we talked about then made me mature faster because by being the child closest to her and almost like a friend, I helped her carry her very heavy cross. Sometimes we would even cry together.

The day she left, I could do nothing but shed tears. When it was time for her to go, I kissed her and turned away without looking back. From then on, there was hardly a night when I did not cry. I missed my closest ally in the house and my pillow-fight partner.

The next five years were the most miserable year of my young life. Aside from my loneliness, I had to deal with an alcoholic father, an older sister who was materialistic and the confusion that came with the onset of puberty.

Luckily for me, I never turned to drugs or abandoned my studies. I believed that for all the sacrifices she was doing, I owed mama at least good grades. Indeed, I topped the honor roll and was active in extemporaneous speaking, debate, the school paper and other extra curricular activities.

But despite all this, what have stuck in my memory are not the moments when I received medals or trophies. What I remember very well was my disappointment over not seeing the proud and smiling face of my mother.

After five years, my mother was able to save enough to pay back our loan and keep our house. She came home, but I was not able to meet her at the airport since I had exams that day. But when we saw each other two days later, she cried a lot and remarked that there was sadness in my eyes.

I thought her return would the beginning of a better life for all of us. But again I was wrong. A few days after mama's arrival, my sister ran away, leaving her daughter behind, because she had used the titles to land, my mother owned to borrow from the bank. I hated her for the sadness she brought to my mother.

Luckily, my mother had enough money left to redeem the property. But I was filled with anger toward my sister, my brother and my father who all took part in the deal. I was angry with them for reopening a wound that had not even started to heal.

It was only a year ago when my feelings turned from sadness to hatred. Then, I fell in love with Niña, a classmate. Her friends told me that mine was an "impossible dream" because she is Chinese and her parents closely follow old traditions. So, there I was, already torn by family problems and now facing another one caused by discrimination. Despite the pain, I showed a hard and quiet exterior to everyone, my mother included. I was so different from what I was when I was a kid.

I was in this state of confusion when, on my way home to our boarding house one night, I saw a falling star. Somehow it made me remember my childhood thoughts. And for the first time in five years, I began to pray. I quickly realized that I didn't know whom to pray to anymore and that a lot of the good things I believed in when I was young, I had lost along the way.

Looking back now, I believe that no life can go so wrong that it can't be turned right. That no sadness could not eventually be turned into happiness. When I saw a falling star, I told myself that I would not let pain change who I am and that I would not let myself be isolated from everyone because of the problems I face.

It was then that things started going right for me. My healing started. My mother again became my best friend and we started to catch up on what we had missed in the past five years. Over her parents' reservations, Niña and I became friends and then sweethearts. We look at the problems that stand between us as something that can be overcome. For the first time in my life, I have found someone I trust enough to share the past I hated and the future I fear, and it makes things so much easier to carry. I have rediscovered what it is to be happy again. I no longer focus on the problems I have or the things I could have done in the past.

I saw a falling star, and its glory lasted a mere fraction of a second. But it made me feel that God actually remembered me. He let me know that He was out there somewhere, waiting for me.

I don't know if I will see another falling star. But I can feel its magic every time I look into the eyes of the persons I love.

Anton Dominic Arrazola, 19, is a 2nd year nursing student at University of the St. La Salle Bacolod.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Pact to disagree

"There were differences of opinion on how to move forward. So they decided to leave the company. We simply agreed to disagree."
—*Smart Communications Inc. spokesperson Ramon Isberto on the mass resignation of officers and employees in Smart's affiliate, Meridian Telekoms Inc.*

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PPI

Decent and honest Comelec revealing itself

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND THE many field officers of the Commission on Elections who are raising questions on their being assigned to verify signatures for Charter change and who are resisting attempts (by officials of the Department of Interior and Local Government) to pressure them into unduly hastening the process. These Comelec people are typical of the many bureaucrats and career officials in government who have the competence, integrity and determination to do their job well, though they are largely unsung.

These Comelec career and field people have been delivering generally credible elections since 1987, including the 2004 elections. Most elections are delivered at the local level. The fact is that, out of some 17,000 positions at stake in 2004, the results of only 60 or so have been protested. The fact is that an overwhelming number of results at the local level were accepted as valid by the people themselves in their own communities. That's an outstanding performance by the Comelec's field officers, despite the burden of poor leadership.

The statement of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and that of the National Movement for Free Elections, issued after the 2004 elections, characterized the elections as generally fair and credible. That description referred to the general conduct and results for the 17,000 positions. Unfortunately, these statements were misused or taken out of context by both the administration and the opposition to serve partisan purposes; and even by some sectors of the media as basis to question the integrity of the entire Comelec.

Other than the bunglings and questionable transactions of the commission itself, the cloud of doubts and skepticism over the 2004 elections is mainly due to the controversy over the presidential elections. And those who are familiar with the process know that it is really possible for wholesale cheating to occur for that position alone and nowhere else, since such cheating is done at the canvassing (consolidation) phase, which is beyond the level of most of the field officers of the Comelec.

I think the public will see more demonstrations of independent and forthright behavior by Comelec people in the days ahead on the issue of the initiative to amend the Constitution. That's the Comelec I know and am proud of. And I hope that the public will show their appreciation of such behavior so that they may be encouraged to remain strong in the service of the country.

—CHRISTIAN S. MONSOD,
former Comelec chair,
Makati City

VAT in the long run: cruel and deadly

OLIVER PACIFICO SHOULD NOT BElieve all that the economists, especially those paid by the government and private corporations, tell him. (PDI, 3/22/06) If the economists were right we would today be sailing in a sea of prosperity, instead of sinking in a morass of poverty.

VAT is a cruel tax, especially for the poor who have what the economists call an "inelastic" (fixed) income. If prices rise because of VAT and other causes, the poor simply have to cut their expenses. Thus if the prices of food products soar, the poor have to reduce their food consumption at the risk of getting malnourished. If the costs of medicine go up, they have to cut down on their medicine—a "no-choice" that could bring them to their graves much earlier. They might even have to pull their children out of school. VAT hurt the poor the most. And more than 40 percent of our people (according to the Asian Development Bank, World Factbook) live below the poverty line.

But even the middle class and the rich do not have totally "flexible" incomes. When prices go up, they really don't have full discretion in their purchases, as Pacifico claims. For instance, if the price of water goes up—as it has, at least three times in recent past—will the teacher, the employee or the middle-level executive drink less water, bathe only once a week and wash his clothes only every other week? What about gasoline, medicine and the other essential needs? Will Mr. Juan de la Cruz commute less frequently to work or take less of the prescribed dosage of medicine? Will the taxi and jeepney drivers cut down their trips because the cost of diesel has gone up? There are necessities that have to be purchased even if they become prohibitive in price. And for every price increase, the government increases its tax collection from the 12-percent VAT on every purchase.

So let's not believe all the gobbledygook that says Mr. Juan de la Cruz will not suffer from VAT, or that if he suffers, it will only be in the short run and he will be better off in the long run. In the long run, as maverick economist Kenneth Galbraith said, we are all dead.

—MANUEL F. ALMARIO,
Mfalmario@yahoo.com

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

PHILIPPINE LETTERS DAILY INQUIRER

Useless barangay officials?

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE FEB. 14 column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan, where she stated: "Our barangay officials who are paid by the taxpayers are not being utilized for promoting security and fighting vices. They only become useful to politicians at election time. They should be harnessed to work for the welfare of the people who pay their salaries."

Cunanan should not make sweeping accusations. If the officials in her barangay do not render security service and fight vice, that is not true in ours.

Regarding her comment on the usefulness of barangay officials only during elections, she is absolutely wrong. Barangay officials are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, election or no election.

Most of all, I wish to inform her that barangay officials, despite their 24-hour duty, do not receive salaries. They get only a measly honorarium from the government which is way below the minimum wage. Maybe Cunanan can do something about this.

—MILDRED SABBUN-DALLUAY,
kagawad, Barangay Queens Row Central,
Bacoor, Cavite

Where to collect PVAO arrearages

THIS REFERS TO ERLINDA P. VILLANUEva's letter regarding the non-release of her pension arrears. (PDI, 3/14/06)

Our division is tasked to process Old Age Pension claims. This we have done for Villanueva. Proof of this is that she is already an active member of Old Age Pension.

We sent Villanueva a letter last Aug. 4. I also have talked to her through the phone. In both instances, I fully explained to her that as far as payments of arrears are concerned, the personnel to contact is Heriberto Ruanto, chief of the Financial Management Division, who knows the budgetary aspects of this office.

—ROGELIO A. DAYAN,
administrator,
Philippine Veterans Affairs Office,
Veterans Compound, Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

Pro-elite agrarian reform secretaries

I AGREE 100 PERCENT WITH PDI'S March 30 editorial. If I may add, President Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed agrarian reform secretaries—three in a row-despite their being ignorant about the nitty-gritty of agrarian reform. One of them did not finish college. Another was a traditional politician with business interests. Another one even had the nerve to face the farmers in a dialogue asking what the acronym "VOS" meant. (VOS means Voluntary Offer to Sell, an option more favorable to landowners than compulsory acquisition.)

Those appointments by the President, we believe, were political paybacks and were intended to perpetuate her hold on power. Of course, the appointments delighted the landed elite, but disappointed the landless and land-poor farmers who did not get even a centavo from the controversial P544-million GMA rice distribution program.

—DONG B. CALMADA,
national coordinator,
PEACE Foundation Inc.,
www.peace.net.ph

What's DFA policy re birth certificate?

MAY I CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO what seems to be the Department of Foreign Affairs' double-standard in verifying and authenticating birth certificates for passport application.

On April 5, I submitted the NSO (National Statistics Office)-authenticated birth certificates of my two nieces but one was rejected. The lady in Window 18 explained that the certificate did not indicate the hospital's address. I asked her why the birth certificate of my other niece was accepted when it did not indicate the hospital's address either. She explained that the hospital cited in that certificate was a prominent one and its location was "common knowledge," unlike the community hospital in the rejected birth certificate.

We were then told to get a supplemental report from the City Hall indicating the location of the community hospital in question. We had to submit this report to the NSO for updating, after which we had to get a copy of the updated birth certificate which should by then reflect the location of the hospital.

As a conscientious taxpayer expecting good service from a government office, I would like to know: Should the hospital size and name recall be criteria for the validity of a birth certificate? Shouldn't the NSO, having the resources to confirm the birth data in this country, be the final arbiter for this? And isn't this the reason why all official Philippine transactions that need accurate information on a person's identity require NSO-vetted documents? Does the DFA have a bias against smaller community hospitals? (The majority of Filipinos prefer these hospitals because they usually can't afford to pay the charges in bigger, more expensive medical institutions.)

I asked the lady how common is "common knowledge." I pointed out to her that if I came from the province or a remote place, I probably wouldn't know the prominent hospital's location. She said it would depend on whether the officials issuing the passport were familiar with the location of the hospital.

So it appears that the DFA has no established policy on this matter, and the basis for accepting a birth certificate is all subjective.

I would like to be enlightened on the official DFA policy on birth certificates. It bothers me that two sets of rules seem to apply: one for smaller hospitals and another for bigger ones. Where is equality of law in this case? And if there are specific rules on the mention of hospital locations in birth certificates, shouldn't the DFA inform the NSO, and correspondingly, the applicants who are the ones burdened with flawed documentation?

—LIZA S. AZARCON,
florliza419@yahoo.com

Freedom of expression in a democracy

INQUIRER'S MARCH 16 EDITORIAL said, "The Supreme Court must remind the Arroyo administration gently but confidently not to kill Rizal all over again." Well said. For the cornerstone, in fact, the raison d'etre of our democratic project lies in the freedom of expression and the freedom of conscience which Proclamation 1017 apparently has buried in the dust.

In his running debate with Jesuit Fr. Pablo Pastells, Dr. Jose Rizal pointed out that God endowed man with a free mind which should never be enslaved. This freedom enabled man to live in dignity and taking it away from him would reduce him to nothingness.

"Every organism," the hero said, "moves toward a certain end—man's [end] is his self-esteem. Remove that and man becomes a corpse, and whoever looks for life in a corpse will find only worms."

President Macapagal-Arroyo's self-serving act, allegedly to stop the State from collapsing, was very much like what dictator Ferdinand Marcos did many years ago. But Ms Arroyo did not want to call it martial law (although it is the same dog with a new collar).

There are many ways of killing Rizal—and all the others who laid down their lives for the sake of liberty—again. And authoritarianism is one of them.

Should the State's survival be at the price of press freedom? Many years ago, Thomas Jefferson, one of the greatest statesmen, said: "If I were to choose between a government without a press and a press without government, I would not hesitate to choose the latter." Let that truth sink in the minds of President Arroyo and her nincompoops before our nation is devoured by the flames of civil war.

—REV. S.D. EDUARTE,
United Church of Christ,
San Nicolas, 2447 Pangasinan

A Christian nation with unchristian values

FOR A SEMINARIAN TO QUESTION which God President Macapagal-Arroyo is praying to is bad taste. ("Arroyo's god," PDI, 3/24/06) Everything that happens in this world happens because God allows it to happen.

Our wisdom is infinitesimally inconsequential before God that we cannot comprehend why things happen. Just because GMA remains president does not mean that her God is unjust. Maybe, God placed her there to put all these "self-righteous people" in their proper place. A seminarian does not have a monopoly of truth and virtues.

The problem with most of us Filipinos is we believe everything that is peddled as truths. What is confounding is we have religious people dabbling in politics when they should be the first ones to heed people's clamor for moral reformation. I would appreciate this seminarian if he would just concentrate in propagating the gospel for more people to go back to God.

As it is now, the Philippines is a Christian nation with the most unchristian values. Just look around you, in billboards, in town squares, in clubs, etc.

—AHMED CORTES,
ahscor2001@yahoo.com

Overhauling electoral system more critical

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK BEL CUnanan for enlightening me on the real intent of her March 16 column, titled "Cost of destabilization." It was certainly not my intention to misread or misinterpret (her choice of words) her column.

Perhaps, I am a bit subjective as every time I read her these days, I get the feeling I am reading an article written either by Ignacio Bunye or Michael Defensor.

However, I am certainly glad to note that Cunanan believes (she can correct me if I misread her yet again and I apologize in advance) the same way I do, that reforming, nay, overhauling our electoral system is a very important issue that we should address. This is far more critical than changing our political system. Ensuring that no cheater should ever become a president (again), senator, congressman, or even a barangay councilman is to my mind the best legacy we can leave our children. I hope Cunanan will continue to use the "power of the pen" in this advocacy.

—MARCOS SIBAL,
msibal@cm2r.com

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Item No.	Name of Project / Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration
1	- 1 - Lot Supply, installation and commissioning of two (2) units Electric Induction Evaluation Melting Furnace	P 2,200,000.00	Delivery to Port of Loading: 8 weeks after opening of letter of credit
2	- 1 - Lot Supply, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit Electric Induction Tilting Furnace	P 8,000,000.00	Delivery to Port of Loading: 8 weeks after opening of letter of credit
3	- 1 - Lot Supply, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit Vacuum Heat Treatment Furnace	P 23,000,000.00	Delivery to Port of Loading: 8 weeks after opening of Letter of credit

Prospective bidders should have undertaken similar projects within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	11 April to 27 April 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	28 April 2006; 10:30 A.M.
3. Opening of Bids	16 May 2006; 2:00 P.M.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount to the BSP Cashier, as follows: Item 1 – P 1,100.00; Item 2 – P 4,000.00; and Item 3 – P11,500.00.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals or declare the bidding a failure or not award the contract and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – April 11, 2006)

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
BFO Building, Ortigas Avenue cor. EDSA, Mandaluyong City 1500
Website: www.poea.gov.ph
E-mail: info@poea.gov.ph
Hotlines: 722-1144, 722-1155

ISO 9001:2000

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 04
(Series of 2006)

TO : ALL CONCERNED
SUBJECT : GUIDELINES ON THE RECRUITMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF FILIPINO WORKERS TO AUSTRALIA

In line with the Administration's thrust to ensure the welfare of Filipino workers bound for Australia, the following guidelines shall govern the accreditation of Australian principals/employers and employment of Filipino workers in the country:

A. Accreditation of Australian Principals/Employers:

The following documents, duly authenticated by the Philippine Embassy/Consulate in Australia, shall be submitted to POEA for evaluation/approval of accreditation:

1. Special Power of Attorney
2. Manpower request indicating the position and salary of the workers to be hired
3. Master employment contract of the principal/employer
4. Valid business license/commercial registration of the principal/employer
5. Sponsorship nomination approval from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) of Australia

In case the principal/employer is a foreign placement agency, a list of the direct employers, their addresses and workers needed shall be submitted.

For request for additional job orders, the sponsorship nomination approval from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) of Australia for the new job orders shall be submitted together with the manpower request notarized in Australia.

B. Within two (2) weeks upon arrival in Australia, all Filipino workers are required to submit to the Philippine Embassy in Canberra, a duly accomplished feedback/registration form that will be provided to the workers during their Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar.

For strict compliance.

(Sgd.) ROSALINDA A. DIMAPILIS BALDOZ
Administrator

(PDI – April 11, 2006)

Standard Form Number – 05
Revised on July 29, 2004
Contract Reference Number 300-06-008

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Provincial Capitol, Malaybalay City
Telephone No. 813-3353 & 221-3114 Telefax No. 813-2141
E-mail address: buk_provl_bac@yahoo.com.ph

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
Bids and Awards Committee

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of contract	Construction of Talakag Water Supply
Location	Talakag, Bukidnon
Brief Description	Const. of 1 unit Intake Box, Installation of G.I. uPVC pipes with a length of 28,781 meters, Construction of River Crossing Structure at Batang River and Construction of 1 unit Ground Reservoir (26,000.00 Gallons Capacity) and 2 units 26,000.00 Ground Reservoir and Construction of 2 units Ground Reservoir with a capacity of 6,000.00 gallons each.
Contract Reference Number	300-06-008
Approved Budget for the Contract	P 26,819,021.00
Contract Duration	365.00 Calendar Days including rainfall allowance

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

1. Advertisement	April 5-18, 2006
2. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility Forms	April 25, 2006 Until 9:00 A.M. only
3. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	April 28, 2006
4. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 2, 2006
5. Pre-Bid	May 9, 2006
6. Receipt and Opening of Bids	May 23, 2006, 9:00 A.M.

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of P200.00 Eligibility Form to the Provincial Treasurer Office. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC Secretariat Office, Capitol, Malaybalay City. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC Secretariat at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the Bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00.

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved:

(Sgd.) JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES
Provincial Administrator
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 11 & 17, 2006)

Opposition pushes snap poll

From page A1

"What we need is someone who has the guts to do the right things even against the flow of political convenience. People are not interested in alternative leaders but alternative futures," Bunye said.

Explaining the President's perennially low approval rating, Bunye said: "Every leader has encountered the ups and downs of popularity, but only a few have made a difference in the lives of the Filipino."

Estrada spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen said a Pulse Asia survey should bury Malacañang's claim that there was no viable alternative to the President. He said the poll showed that 22 percent of Filipinos believed Estrada was the best person to lead the country, or twice the 11 percent for Ms Arroyo.

Despite being the most disliked President in the last two decades, Ms Arroyo raised taxes in the last two years to improve the country's fiscal standing and declared she would risk losing more points in the ratings game to push ahead with her Charter change agenda.

Coming to a head

"Shall we stay put or shall we cross the threshold of economic takeoff and fundamental political change? The events that are coming to a head—economic takeoff and Charter change—will foretell whether this nation will slide back to the dark ages of division and stagnation, or break off to a new dawn of stability and shared responsibility," Bunye said.

With Ms Arroyo playing deaf to the persistent calls of the opposition for her to step down, the House minority yesterday challenged her instead to "make the supreme sacrifice" during the Holy Week by calling for a snap election.

The minority has already drafted a short list of nominees"—Senators Manuel Villar, Manuel Roxas II and Panfilo Lacson and Senate President Franklin Drilon.

At a press conference, Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano and party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva of Citizen Battle Against Corruption said that the opposition would get its act together and anoint someone to face Ms Arroyo in a one-on-one fight.

The exercise will only take 45 to 60 days, according to Cayetano.

The right path

"The President should realize that 85 million Filipinos cannot continue sacrificing so that she will just stay in power. She should realize that the only solution that is acceptable to all and that would put the nation in the right path is calling for a snap election. Let the people decide who should lead us," Cayetano said.

He said that "if she wins in the snap election, then she solves the legitimacy issue. Did she steal, cheat and lie? Let's give the choice to the people."

Asked why popular actress Susan Roces, widow of the late presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., had not been included in the short list, Cayetano said: "She has insisted that she's only after justice for her husband in connection with the results of the last election. She said she has no intention of running for President."

Cayetano said even Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan might also be considered by the opposition to be its standard-bearer.

An act of penitence

Cayetano said Ms Arroyo could claim that the calling of a snap election was an "act of penitence, martyrdom, or even heroism."

"If you want to call it a sacrifice—just so she will agree to it—let's even call it a supreme sacrifice. We can't go on living in a country rocked by a political crisis which compounds the plight of poor Filipinos. The question is not who should replace her. Whether it's a big bad wolf, or a knight in shining armor is of no moment," he said.

Paraphrasing the statement issued by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Cayetano said that "if she has balls, why can't she call a snap election? Unless she already knows that she will lose."

Villanueva said that Ms Arroyo should take advantage of Christendom's observance of the Passion of Christ to weigh things.

Cayetano said the people's initiative to amend the Charter was not a viable option to end the political crisis because it would only prolong Ms Arroyo's stay in power.

"Under the proposed amendments, it would be almost impossible to impeach her," he said. The vote needed to make this happen has been increased from one-third of House membership [the requirement will be] two thirds. "It will only give her the opportunity to be president or prime minister for life," he added.

Text Mary program instant hit

From page A1

and are now praying for them.

Community prayer is the essence of the redesigned "Text Mary" program of the late Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

The pioneering project was launched nine months ago so the faithful could send in prayer petitions through a convenient technology—text messaging.

It an easier, albeit impersonal, alternative than going to church.

The project was an instant hit. Messages choked the old server, prompting Naimar Management Inc.—which maintains the system—to fine-tune Text Mary, eliminate the glitches and get other Catholics involved as well.

Community prayer

"The idea now is to foster community prayer," Paolo Reyes, 35, Naimar managing director, told the INQUIRER in an interview.

In the past, a petition sent to Text Mary was known only to the sender and the priests or congregations that would include the petitions in their prayers. In the new system, petitions are "forwarded" to other texters.

They're all encouraged to pray for one another, Reyes explained.

The girl who wanted her boyfriend back, for instance, got a message of sympathy from another texter who said, referring to the guy: "*Hoy, panagutan mo na* (Hey, take care of your responsibility)!"

At the same time, others had been praying for the financially troubled mother and the texter with a homosexual father.

How to text Mary

The simplified system now allows subscribers—whether Globe, Smart or other mobile phone networks—to send their petitions to only one number: 2600.

To include a petition for Mass, key in "MASS <space> <petition>" then send the message to 2600. For example: "Mass I want a new job."

To be included in a Mass daily, just type "ON MASS."

The same format can be used if you wish to be included in a rosary or novena. Substitute "ROSARY" or "NOVENA" for "MASS." Each message costs P2.50.

20 shrines

Since Text Mary was introduced in August last year, Reyes said organizers had raised enough money to construct five shrines representing the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary.

The aim is to build 20 shrines, collectively called the "Way of Mary," in specific locations along the 14-km stretch from the Edsa Shrine on Ortigas Avenue to the Antipolo Cathedral in Antipolo City.

Each shrine will be about 12 feet high and cost P400,000, Reyes said. It will have a bas-relief of each of the 20 Mysteries of the Rosary, to be sculpted in concrete and steel by Angono artist Nemiranda and mounted on a pedestal designed by architect Joey Amistoso.

Target: P6 million

Reyes said project proponents still needed P6 million more to complete all 20 shrines by Dec. 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Raising the huge amount would have been easier if only they accepted hefty donations from companies and some personalities, according to Reyes.

His father Louie, a trustee of the Way of Mary project, admitted turning down at least 10 donations. He was "turned off" by some of the donors' insistence that their names be included in the shrine of their choice.

"That's not the spirit of this endeavor," Reyes told the INQUIRER. "No donor's name will appear on the shrines. They're supposed to be owned by the people whose donations, made through their text petitions, helped build the shrines."

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South Luzon	April 22	Rosario, Cavite
	April 25	Mabini, Batangas
	May 3	Bauan, Batangas
	May 15	Cuenca, Batangas
	May 16	San Juan, Batangas
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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Cops under attack in Pasig, Marikina / A16

■ Old-style 'Pabasa' a crowd-drawer at Quezon Memorial Circle / A16

4 Pasig ambush suspects charged

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Luige A. del Puerto

FOUR PERSONS HAVE BEEN CHARGED IN the Pasig City Prosecutor's Office for the murder of police Internal Affairs Service officer Chief Insp. Renato Marasigan who was ambushed last month in Pasig City.

The police had earlier arrested one of those charged, Leonardo Capili, in Caloocan City, after an informant told them that the suspect had boasted that he was involved in the murder. The others were still at large at press time.

The four suspects, according to the asset, were paid P500,000 to kill Marasigan although the police have yet to determine the motive behind his assassination.

Some police officials had said that the killing could have something to do with the investigation Marasigan was conducting on the proliferation of drugs in Pasig City.

But some investigators said the killing could be connected to his business interests and property.

The other men charged with murder were Manuel Mendoza of Bagong Barrio in Caloocan City, George Guimbo, and an alias Dura. Also included in the charge sheet were several unidentified suspects.

In the information filed yesterday at the prosecutor's office, the police said Capili identified his three alleged cohorts during interrogation.

"We showed him sketches of the other suspects and he gave a name to each," said Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Criminal Investigation and Detection Division.

Marasigan was ambushed while he was driving his bullet-proof Pajero in Barangay Malinao, Pasig City, on March 29. He was just meters away from his house and was on his way to work when four men walked up to his vehicle and opened fire, the police said.

In her sworn statement, Marasigan's widow, Venus, said Capili looked familiar. She added that she had seen him two days before her husband was killed near their house.

The investigation into Marasigan's death had faced a blank wall for several days. All the police could produce was sketches of at least six suspects based on descriptions of eyewitnesses.

More than a week later, a witness who saw a sketch of one of the suspects on television led the police to Capili's house in Barangay Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City. Another witness also identified Capili as one of the four suspects who had shot Marasigan.

Capili was also positively identified by another witness as one of the gunmen when he was presented at police headquarters. The witness said Capili even approached him before the ambush.

"He bought a newspaper from me. Then he crossed the street and looked as if he was waiting for someone," the witness said in his affidavit, written in Filipino.

"He suddenly opened fire when Mr. Marasigan passed by," he added. He said Capili even aimed his gun at the shocked bystanders before walking casually away with his alleged cohorts.

Last week, an informant told the police that Capili had offered him a "job" which he refused, according to De los Santos.

A week later, Capili showed him a newspaper clipping of Marasigan's murder and said, "Buddy, you did not come along. This was worth P500,000."

SUSPECT Capili shortly after his arrest. RAFFY LERMA

Not a fair exchange, say studes

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A PROFESSOR AT THE PHILIPPINE MARitime Institute in Manila was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation on Friday for allegedly demanding a DVD player from his students in exchange for passing grades.

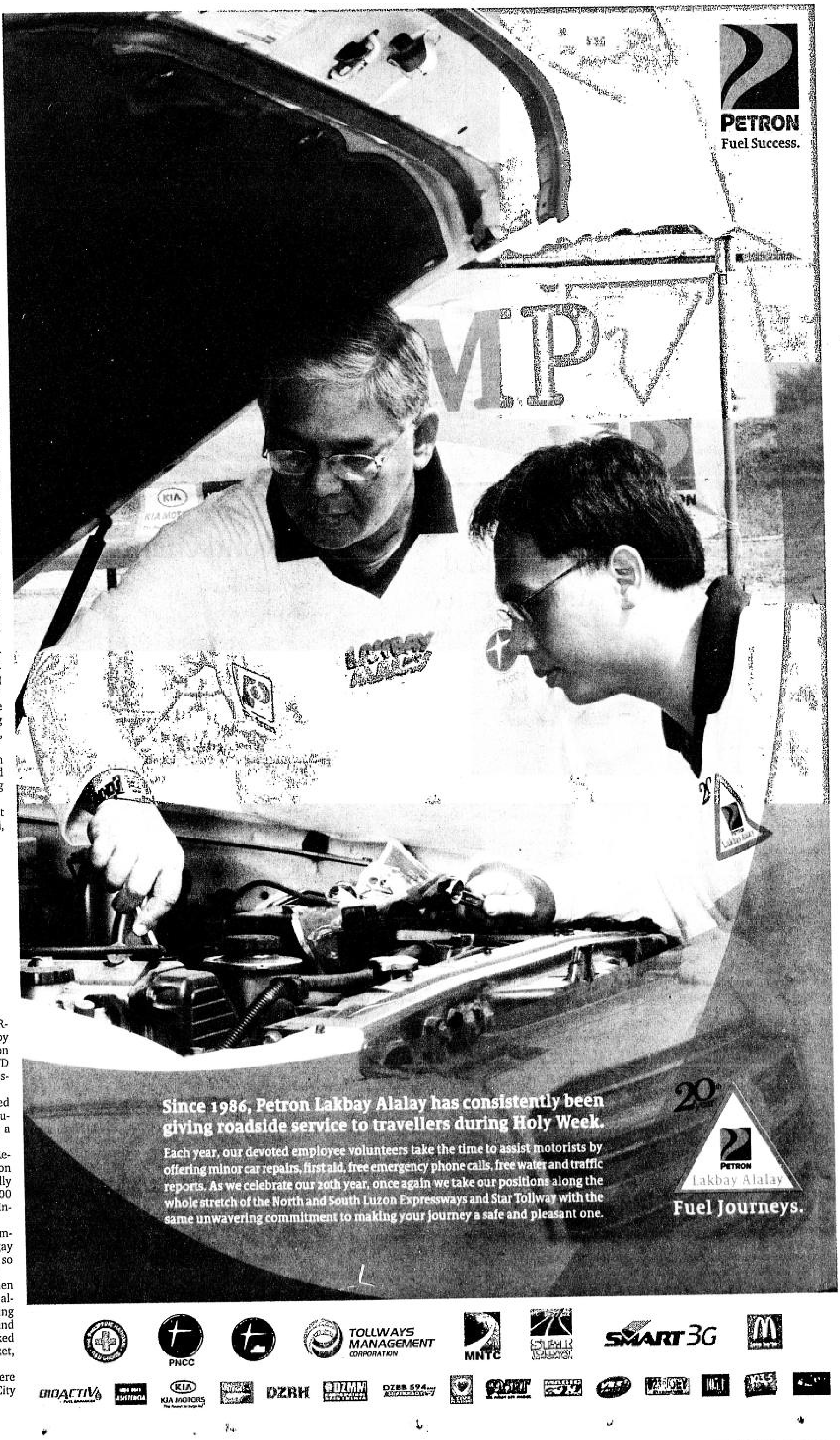
Lawyer Raul Macatangay was nabbed while accepting money from one of his students during an entrapment operation in a shopping mall in Sta. Mesa, Quezon City.

An investigation conducted by the NBI Reaction, Arrest and Interdiction Division (RAID) showed that the suspect had allegedly demanded a Sony DVD player worth P6,000 from students of his "Law on Negotiable Instrument" class.

PMI student Angelica Vitangcol, in a complaint filed before the NBI, said Macatangay told them to give him the money last Friday so he could buy the player.

Vitangcol and 14 of her classmates then sought the NBI's help after the suspect allegedly sent her a text message instructing them to bring the money to the mall at around 7 p.m. A white envelope containing marked bills was recovered from the lawyer's pocket, according to RAID chief Roel Bolivar.

Bolivar said grave coercion charges were filed against the suspect in the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.



Since 1986, Petron Lakbay Alalay has consistently been giving roadside service to travellers during Holy Week.

Each year, our devoted employee volunteers take the time to assist motorists by offering minor car repairs, first aid, free emergency phone calls, free water and traffic reports. As we celebrate our 20th year, once again we take our positions along the whole stretch of the North and South Luzon Expressways and Star Tollway with the same unwavering commitment to making your journey a safe and pleasant one.

Fuel Journeys.

Pasig, Marikina cops advised to be more careful

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO PROtect the public and go after criminals. But in the last two weeks, four policemen fell prey to killers in the cities of Marikina and Pasig.

"We have already instructed our men to be extra careful and always be vigilant," Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino told the INQUIRER the other day.

The latest victim was PO2 Pepito Salazar of the Quezon City Police District Mobile Patrol, who was shot to death while on board his jeep in Marikina City on Friday afternoon.

The three killers made sure he was killed: Scene of the Crime Operatives recovered 12 empty shells from a .45 caliber handgun and an empty shell from a 9 mm handgun.

His service firearm was also missing, police added.

Another Quezon City policeman, SPO2 Ramon Borre, was shot four times in the head while carrying his 6-month-old grandson in front of his house in Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City, on March 26.

Three days later, Chief Insp. Renato Marasigan of the Internal Affairs Service was also killed in Pasig City while he was driving his car on Barangay Malinao.

On April 4, PO2 Ramon De Leon of the Pasig City Police was stabbed to death as he was about to report for work.

Suspect Tomas Bedana, whom De Leon had arrested for robbery months ago, allegedly stabbed him 13 times and even slashed throat.

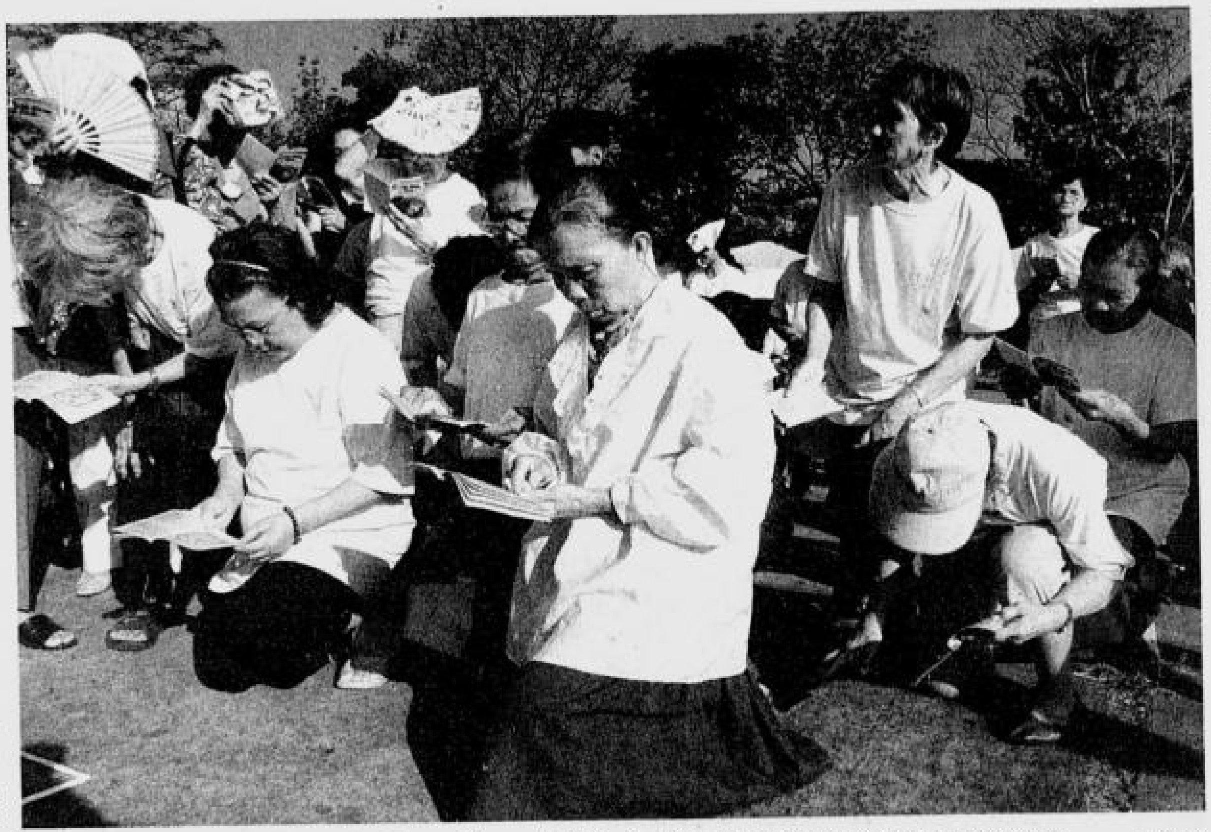
The suspect managed to escape, taking with him his knife and the policeman's service firearm.

Pasig City Mayor Vicènte Eusebio had expressed alarm over the spate of killings in the city and said he could not do much because the National Police Commission had already stripped him of his police powers.

He urged the national police to stop sending city policemen for retraining because lack of manpower could be affecting the capability of the police force.

Old-style 'Pabasa' at QC Memorial Circle

By DJ Yap



DEVOTEES have been flocking to the Quezon Memorial Circle for 11 years now for the traditional "Pabasa." RYAN LIM

IN AN AGE THAT GLORIFIES EVERYthing modern and citified, there is still room for traditional religious rituals like the "pabasa."

Take a stroll down Quezon Memorial Circle on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and you will hear the familiar strains of the "Pasyon" filling the air.

There are no gimmicks, "hip-hop" versions or stylized renditions. It is done the way Filipino women—and some men—have always sung or read it in simpler times and climes.

"It's not just about preserving tradition, but giving it life," said Deanna Enrile, head servant of the Community of Love, a charismatic Christian group which helps the sick, aged and disabled.

This Holy Week, the Community of Love will be holding a pabasa at the Liwasang Aurora on the QMC grounds from 5 p.m. on Thursday to 10 a.m. on Friday.

The pabasa is a uniquely Filipino tradition of reading or singing the Pasyon (passion), a book narrating the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"We want to give actual life to the Pasyon, which contains the Lord's beautiful teachings. It contains the love letters of God," Enrile said.

The Community of Love has been holding the pabasa at the QMC for the past 11 years, she added.

On Thursday, some 40-50 participants will take turns in singing the Pasyon throughout the night. Most of them are women in their 50s and 60s. "Maybe, one or two men will join in," Enrile said.

She had also invited some teenagers from Laguna to take part in the pabasa, but was not sure if they would be able to come.

Recalling their past pabasa at the park, Enrile said strollers and bystanders sometimes sit down with the group to listen, or even participate in the singing.

"That only shows that there is still an attraction left in traditional rituals," she said.

The Pasyon is a "book of light, a guide for us to follow the example of Jesus' life and teachings," Enrile said.

If old traditions like the pabasa die out, then "it will be everyone's loss," she added.

She lamented that in today's age, the old ways of the Catholic faith were continually being eroded, with the familiar giving way to the novel.

Even praying the rosary has become something complicated, Enrile said.

"It seems that nobody knows how to pray the rosary anymore. Whenever I give rosaries, I have to attach instructions so the recipients will know how to pray it," she said.

"How can you love Mama Mary if you don't know how to pray to her?" she said. "If your world is noisy, how can you listen to God's Word?"

Enrile said infusing modern gimmickry into old traditions was an "insult." "Turning a ritual into a fiesta only diverts attention from God," she said.

"The pabasa is one way of knowing God personally. We understand and learn from all his sufferings. We'll know the reason why he died for us. Once we understand how God suffered for us, that's when we realize our responsibility to love and serve him," she said.

METROBRIEFS

Hospital shutdown

THE GOVERNMENT-RUN Ospital ng Manila (OsMa) Medical Center will be closed for six days beginning tomorrow. Dr. Joyce Chow, OsMa administrator, said the hospital will undergo a total power shutdown from April 12 to April 18 because of rehabilitation work on the main power supply line. Chow said the facility's power lines, which have been operational since OsMa was constructed in 1969, would be improved and repaired. Patients confined at the hospital have been brought to other city-owned medical facilities. Chow added that OsMa will resume operations on April 19. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Not as safe

AN INDONESIAN diplomat came home on Saturday to find the jewelry and money he had been keeping in his bedroom missing. Indonesian military attaché Gunadi Budi Prayitno told the police that he had left his house in Bel-Air, Makati, on Friday afternoon in the care of his house help, an Indon identified only as Yuliani. When he returned the following day, the jewelry and the money—US$4,000 and SING$1,000—hidden in a drawer in his bedroom were missing. The police said the Indonesian diplomat's helper and other workers in the house would be investigated. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

Hostage-taking in QC

FOR almost an hour, a Chinese-Filipino woman and her nephew were at the mercy of a man who had taken them hostage and hijacked their car in Quezon City yesterday. Elaine Go, 36, had just fetched her 8-year-old nephew from tutoring classes in Manila and was about to take him home to Sta. Mesa Heights when the hijacking occurred at past noon, police said. When Go reached the corner of Araneta and E. Rodriguez Avenues, a man suddenly boarded the back of her grayish blue Honda Civic (plate number UNL 106), said Insp. Reynaldo Medina, chief of the Quezon City police general assignment section. A tricycle driver witnessed the hostage situation and quickly informed the police. The car chase finally ended when the suspect decided to leave Go and her nephew, as well as the car, at the Bocaue exit of the North Luzon Expressway. *DJ Yap*

Shame and scandal at Prosecution Service

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SHAME ON THOSE PROSEcutors!

A reliable source at the Department of Justice told me that four prosecutors assigned at the DOJ are having a heyday making out with some new female prosecutors in exchange for good assignments and their handling of money-making cases.

The prosecutors allegedly invite the female prosecutors to a unit in a condominium near the DOJ main office in Padre Faura, Manila.

Who are the four? They have the initials GM, YA, VT and LR.

After one of them is finished with his victim, the poor woman is then passed on to the others.

I was told that one of the prosecutors even recorded his "sexcapades" in the pad.

An investigation is in order.

* * *

Last month, this corner came out with an item about a sexual harassment complaint filed by a female prosecutor against another prosecutor.

The sexual harassment allegedly took place at the DOJ building.

The lady prosecutor complained to this columnist after the lothario's superiors didn't take action against him.

How can you trust the government's prosecution service with rape or sexual harassment cases if they themselves are doing it?

* * *

Quezon City Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza has been accused by her former employee of using public funds to pay the salaries of her house help and other employees working in her pizza parlor.

Richell Vineles says he drew his salary from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), while the congresswoman's other staff drew theirs from the public works department, and the Quezon City government.

Vineles' revelation, contained in a complaint filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, is hardly surprising.

Most congressmen and congresswomen and local officials have their own "ghost employees," or those who get paid by the government but don't report for work.

In short, Vineles' complaint against the congresswoman from Quezon City is believable.

* * *

If the new Ombudsman, Merceditas N. Gutierrez continues with her no-nonsense, earnest graft-busting, Daza, if guilty, might get the axe.

Other officials similarly accused might also get the boot from Ombudsman (Ombudswoman?) Gutierrez.

On April 1, this column came out with a report that the Office of the Ombudsman dismissed Davao Oriental Provincial Board Member Maria Consuelo "Bambi" Palma Gil for falsifying time records and accomplishment reports of non-existent provincial employees.

The Office of the Ombudsman's order dismissing Palma Gil was signed March 13, 2006. However, Palma Gil continues to hold office at the Davao Oriental Provincial Board.

The Office of the Vice Governor, that is supposed to carry out the dismissal order, has not heeded the Ombudsman's order.

* * *

If you have complaints against policemen, I suggest you file them in the Office of the Ombudsman instead of other government units like the Internal Affairs Service or the National Police Commission.

The agencies I just mentioned act very slowly on complaints against policemen. They seem to be lost in a time warp. My public service program has filed numerous cases against policemen by way of helping aggrieved citizens, but most of the cases are still pending in these offices for many years.

In contrast, the Office of the Ombudsman dismissed recently police Insp. Marco Polo Estrera and PO1 Tirso Rabina of the Police Assistance Center in Balintawak, Quezon City, for beating a robbery victim who sought their help.

My program helped the complainant, Emmanuel Ringor, a restaurant waiter, file the case in 2004.

It took the Office of the Ombudsman only a month short of two years to come up with the decision dismissing the two cops. Many cases we filed in the Napolcom and IAS offices are still pending after five or six years.

MMDA kicks off 'Operation Semana Santa'

TRAFFIC ENFORCERS OF THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will be on duty this entire week to ensure that commuters and motorists get to their destination safely for the Holy Week.

Under the MMDA's "Operation Semana Santa," the agency's contingency plan for Lent, 2,500 traffic enforcers and members of the Traffic Enforcement Group of the National Capital Region Police Office, a special police unit detailed to the MMDA, will be deployed in the metropolis. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

Second chance around for ex-PN man

By Tina G. Santos

CORPUZ: "God wanted me to do something meaningful." RODEL ROTONI

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO SERVE God.

Mauro Corpuz realized this when he found his "true calling" at the age of 53.

Corpuz, also known as "Manong Moring," has become a familiar face particularly among the Catholic faithful of a small community in Bangkal, Makati City.

Now 70, Manong Moring, a former member of the Philippine Navy, has been serving as a lay minister at the Mary Help of Christian chapel for the past 17 years.

"I believe this is my calling. And I will continue serving Him for as long as He wants me to," he told the INQUIRER.

Manong Moring, however, admitted that he did not immediately heed God's call.

In 1988, a priest visited him at home and told him that somebody had recommended him to undergo training to become a lay minister.

"Because he was a priest, I was embarrassed to say no, so I answered yes but I did not come, I never took it seriously," he said in Filipino. At that time, he said he was busy looking after the sari-sari store which he had put up after two years of working in the Middle East.

'Not now, Father'

"Business was good and I wanted to focus on it to support my family," the father of three said. "I was telling myself, 'Father, maybe some other time, not now'."

Manong Moring said that he regularly attended Mass every Sunday and even joined a prayer group but he was not serious in his devotion to God.

A few months later, Manong Moring went through an experience which made him reexamine his priorities. He suffered a mild stroke which led to a week-long stay in the hospital.

"During my stay in the hospital, I had a realization that maybe God wants me to do something for Him," he said, recalling that he had even requested the hospital chaplain to hear his confession and give him communion "to clearly understand what God was trying to tell me."

A second chance

After recovering from his illness, Manong Moring decided that serving God was the best way to thank Him for giving him a second chance in life.

"*Sabi ko, siguro itong pagkakasakit ko hinahaplos lang ako ni Lord para mapansin ko Tinanggihan ko Siya noong hindi ako pumunta para mag*-training (I felt that my sickness was just God's way of getting my attention after I refused to undergo training," he said.

The following year, after making a full recovery from his heart ailment, Manong Moring submitted himself to God.

He now spends most of his time assisting priests during communion and visiting the sick and the elderly in the community.

Manong Moring also takes credit for the strengthening of the community's Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC), a church activity which allows small groups of families to meet, reflect and meditate on the Word of God.

"I realized that, like the Eucharist, we also have to be broken, blessed and shared with others," he said.

Manong Moring said he became more convinced that Divine Providence was steering him toward something he could not readily grasp when another priest visited him at home and convinced him to become the community leader.

"I was told that I was being recommended to become the community leader. My task was to virtually to become the 'bridge' between the parish and the community. I initially said no as I argued that there were many others who can do it. But it eventually got me thinking, 'Why do these priests come to me? God must really wanted me to do something meaningful'," he said.

Closer to Mary

His being a lay minister also led Manong Moring to establish a deeper relationship with the Virgin Mary.

He recalled that during one of his meetings with other community leaders, they were made to draw lots to determine which image of the Virgin Mary would represent the areas they belong to. Manong Moring got the "Immaculate Heart of Mary."

"I thought it was perfect for me because I have a heart ailment. I promised myself that I will take care of her heart so she would take care of mine, too," said Manong Moring, who has since become a Marian devotee.

He added that he has found fulfillment in serving God and joy in knowing that he has helped inspire other people to love Him.

"I know this is what He wants for me," he said. "My relationship with Him has never been better. Everything I do is for him," he added.

Hundreds of thousands march for immigrant rights across US

IMMIGRATION rights crowd estimated by police at 25,000 stage the "Marcha por la dignidad" (March for Dignity) in Salt Lake City. AP

DALLAS—TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE banged drums, waved US flags and marched in a protest urging federal lawmakers to pass immigration reform that would legalize an estimated 11 million undocumented workers.

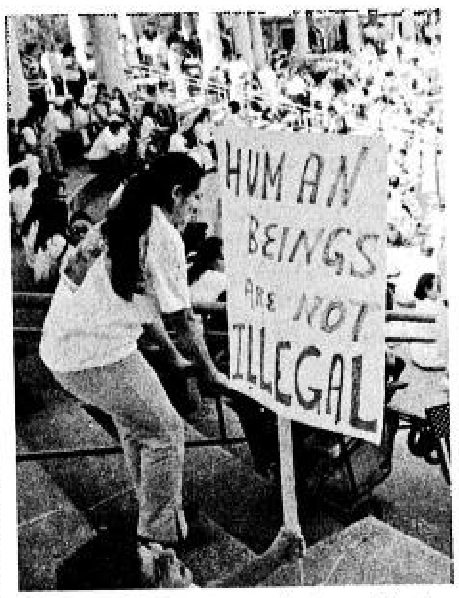
Shouting "Si Se Puede!"—Spanish for "Yes, we can!"—the marchers crammed into the downtown streets on Sunday. They included families pushing strollers with their children and ice cream vendors who placed American flags on their carts. Many wore white clothing to symbolize peace.

Police estimated the crowd at 350,000 to 500,000. There were no reports of violence.

It was among several demonstrations that drew thousands of protesters Sunday in New Mexico, Minnesota, Michigan, Alabama, Utah, Oregon, Idaho and California.

"If we don't protest they'll never hear us," said Oscar Cruz, 23, a construction worker who marched among the estimated 50,000 in San Diego. Cruz, who came illegally to the US in 2003, said he had feared a crackdown but felt emboldened by the large marches across the country in recent weeks.

In Birmingham, Alabama, demonstrators marched along the same streets where civil rights activists clashed with police during the 1960s and rallied at a park where a statue of Martin Luther King Jr. stands as a reminder of the fight for equal rights and the violence that once plagued the city.



IN ST. LOUIS, a protester displays a defiant declaration. AP

"We've got to get back in touch with the Statue of Liberty," said The Rev. Lawton Higgs, a United Methodist pastor and activist. "We've got to get back in touch with the civil rights movement, because that's what this is about."

Organizers in St. Paul, Minnesota, were surprised by the crowd calling for change at a rally at the state Capitol. Police estimated the crowd at 30,000.

The rallies also drew counterdemonstrators.

In Salt Lake City, Jerry Owens, 59, a Navy veteran wearing a blue Minuteman T-shirt and camouflage pants, held a yellow "Don't Tread on Me" flag.

"I think it's real sad because these people are really saying it's OK to be illegal aliens," Owens said. "What Americans are saying is 'Yes, come here. But come here legally.' And I think that's the big problem."

Sunday's demonstrations come ahead of nationwide protests set weeks ago for Monday, a signal that what began as a string of disparate events—attracting tens and even hundreds of thousands of people—has become more coordinated.

"We don't have a leader like Martin Luther King or Cesar Chavez, but this is now a national immigrant rights movement," said Joshua Hoyt, director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, which has helped organize Chicago-area rallies.

Activists say the Senate's decision last week not to push a bill that would have given many illegal immigrants a chance at citizenship is neither a cause for celebration nor a lost opportunity—it's a chance to regroup. *AP*

Alarm over possible US strike on Iran

WASHINGTON—CRITICS OF THE George W. Bush administration expressed alarm Sunday about explosive new reports that the president is mulling military options to knock out Iran's nuclear program.

Retired Gen. Anthony Zinni, the former head of US Central Command, told US television Sunday that he had no detailed knowledge of the alleged military plans, but he suggested a preemptive strike against Iran's nuclear program would be extremely risky.

"Any military plan involving Iran is going to be very difficult. We should not fool ourselves to think it will just be a strike and then it will be over," said Zinni.

"The Iranians will retaliate, and they have many possibilities in an area where there are many vulnerabilities, from our troop positions to the oil and gas in the region that can be interrupted, to attacks on Israel, to the conduct of terrorism," he said.

Zinni made his remarks after the publication of a pair of reports this weekend saying that the administration is seriously considering military action against Iran, amid a stalemate in diplomatic efforts.

The New Yorker magazine reported in its April 17 issue that the administration is planning a massive bombing campaign against Iran, including use of bunker-buster nuclear bombs to destroy a key suspected Iranian nuclear weapons facility.

The article by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh said that Bush and others in the White House have come to view Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as a potential "Adolf Hitler."

"That's the name they're using," Hersh quoted a former senior intelligence official as saying. *AFP*

Brazil's use of ethanol road to energy freedom

PIRACICABA, BRAZIL—AT THE dawn of the automobile age, Henry Ford predicted that "ethyl alcohol is the fuel of the future." With petroleum at about $65 a barrel, President Bush has now embraced that view, too. But Brazil is already there.

This country expects to become energy self-sufficient this year, meeting its growing demand for fuel by increasing production both from petroleum and ethanol. Already the use of ethanol, derived here from sugar cane, is so widespread that gas stations have two sets of pumps, marked A for alcohol and G for gasoline.

Brazil's path has taken 30 years of effort, required several billion dollars in incentives and involved many missteps. While not always easy, it provides clues to the real challenges facing the United States' ambitions.

The use of ethanol here was greatly accelerated in the last three years with the introduction of "flex fuel" engines, designed to run on ethanol, gasoline or any mixture of the two.

But Brazilian officials and business executives say the ethanol industry would develop even faster if the United States did not levy a tax of 54 cents a gallon on all imports of Brazilian cane-based ethanol.

With demand for ethanol soaring here, Brazil recognizes that it is unrealistic to think of exports to the United States now. But Brazilian leaders complain that Washington's restrictions have inhibited foreign investment, particularly by Americans. *NYT*

Stampede in Karachi kills 29

KARACHI—AT LEAST 29 WOMEN and children were killed in a stampede after a religious gathering in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi on Sunday, witnesses said.

Around 20,000 women were gathered with their children in Faizan-e-Madina mosque in the eastern district of the sprawling city to mark the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, which falls on Tuesday.

Local police official Zahid Hussain said the stampede occurred after a girl coming out of the mosque fell down.

Witnesses said the child cried out, sparking panic among the women who tried to force their way out of the mosque.

"All of a sudden there had been screams and shouts. Everyone ran for safety and we too," Haleema Bibi, one of the participants said. "We were just shouting. We did not know what has happened."

"Women fell on each other as panic spread. It was an absolute mayhem. Nobody knew what has happened," another woman said. *Reuters*

LOVE IN THE AFTERNOON
Britain's Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, leave Crathie Church at Balmoral in Scotland, after attending a service on their first wedding anniversary, April 9. REUTERS

EU slaps visa ban on Lukashenko

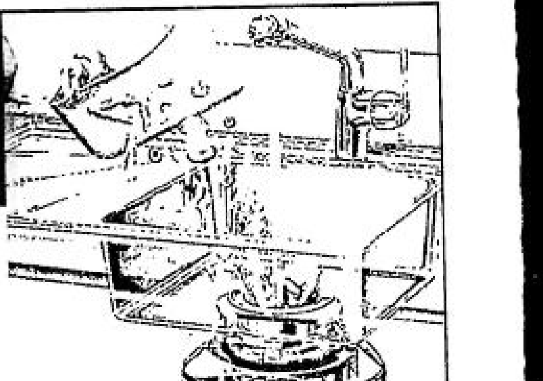
LUXEMBOURG—THE EUROpean Union on Monday banned Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko and 30 ministers, prosecutors and regional election officials from entering the 25-nation bloc, an EU official said.

EU foreign ministers took the decision to punish those they say were involved in rigging Belarus's March 19 presidential polls and a crackdown on opposition activists.

The EU did not decide to freeze the assets of the banned individuals for now but warned it may do so at a later stage, and asked the European Commission to make proposals for further targeted measures, another EU diplomat said.

Lukashenko, sworn in on Saturday, is number one on the list, followed by his head of presidential administration, Gennady Nevyglas, the ministers of education, information and justice, the chairman of the lower house of parliament and the head of the KGB security service.

Others named include the prosecutor-general, several judges and prosecutors, the country's seven regional election officials and the head of the state television and radio company. *Reuters*



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Populist leads in Peru election

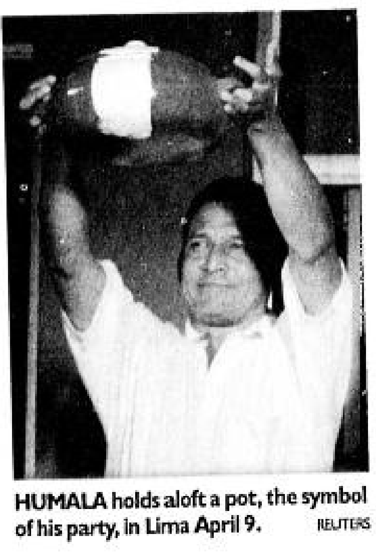
LIMA, PERU—OLLANTA HUMALA, A former Army commander who campaigned to put Peru's economy in state hands, clung to a slim lead on Monday in a tight three-way race for president, official results showed.

With 53 percent of votes counted, Peru's election authority said Humala—who has vowed a revolution to redistribute Peru's wealth to the Andean poor—had 27.8 percent.

Probusiness conservative Lourdes Flores was second with 26.3 percent, followed by left-of-center former President Alan Garcia with 25.6 percent. No candidate had the 50 percent support to avoid a runoff between the top two finishers.

Humala, who also pledges to industrialize Peru's production of coca, the basis for cocaine, worries business leaders and the European-descended upper classes. If elected, the ally of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez would be the latest in a string of Latin American leftists to come to power challenging US policies such as coca eradication.

Peru is the world's No. 2 cocaine producer after Colombia.



HUMALA holds aloft a pot, the symbol of his party, in Lima April 9. REUTERS

"Humala's going to nationalize our natural resources for the good of the people. He's going to end poverty," said Neida Tico, 41, a farm worker voting in Lima.

Most popular among Peru's long-neglected rural poor, Humala pledged to service the country's $30 billion debt if elected and keep a small fiscal deficit despite his generous welfare plans.

The business community dreads a second round between Humala and Garcia, who presided over economic collapse during his 1985-90 rule. Garcia, 56, saw his backing rise in the final preelection polls, as support ebbed for Flores, 46, a lawyer who has struggled to connect with the needy.

In the 2001 election, Garcia slipped past Flores at the last minute to face off against outgoing President Alejandro Toledo in the run-off.

"We're going to see a tough battle over the ballots and Flores and Garcia are going to want every vote counted," political analyst Alberto Adrianzen said.

Undaunted by the close figures, hundreds of Flores's supporters celebrated with fireworks in Lima, assured that she had made the runoff.

Flores, who topped polls only months ago, has played up her potential role as Peru's first female leader in a country where women are perceived as more honest. *Reuters*

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KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dep-ED-Bids and Awards Committee (DepED-BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for Supply and Delivery of the following:

Package	Item	Description of Goods	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Submission deadline/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bidding Documents (non-refundable)
A	1	Tabulating Stock Forms, 3 ply, size = 11 x 10 5/8 (60 bxs.)	Php45,000.00	April 19, 2006 2:00 P.M.	May 5, 2006 2:00 P.M.	Php1,000.00
	2	Tabulating Stock Forms, 3 ply, size = 11 x 14 7/8 (100 bxs.)	Php110,000.00			
	3	Tabulating Stock Forms, 1 ply, size = 11 x 10 5/8 (500 bxs.)	Php425,000.00			
	4	Tabulating Stock Forms, 1 ply, size = 11 x 14 7/8 (100 bxs.)	Php105,000.00			
B	5	Tabulating Stock Forms, 5 ply, size = 11 x 14 7/8 (1,200 bxs.)	Php1,140,000.00			
C	6	6400 Line Printer Ribbon (PN1040998) (100 rolls)	Php175,000.00			
	7	Cartridge Tape (2GB) for QIC2GB Drive (100 cart.)	Php290,000.00			
	8	Zip Disk (Re-writable) (50 pcs.)	Php27,500.00			
		Total	Php2,317,500.00			

Bids received that exceed the ABC per item shall be rejected.

The Venue for Pre-Bid Conference and Submission and Opening of Bids is at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal I Bldg. DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City. The End user is the Payroll Services Division (PSD)

The Bidding Documents in Compact Disc (CD) copy or hard copy shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting **April 5, 2006** upon payment in cash of non-refundable fee indicated above.

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org or call DepED-PS at telephone no. 636-65-43 or fax no. 636-65-42.

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties.

(Sgd.) Atty. **CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA**
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chairman

(PDI—Apr. 4 & 11, 2006)

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Top US Marine regrets Iraq invasion

WASHINGTON—THE THREE-STAR MARINE corps general who was the military's top operations officer before the invasion of Iraq expressed regret, in an essay published Sunday, that he did not more energetically question those who had ordered the nation to war. He also urged active-duty officers to speak out now if they had doubts about the war.

Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold, who retired in late 2002, also called for replacing Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and "many others unwilling to fundamentally change their approach." He is the third retired senior officer in recent weeks to demand that Rumsfeld step down.

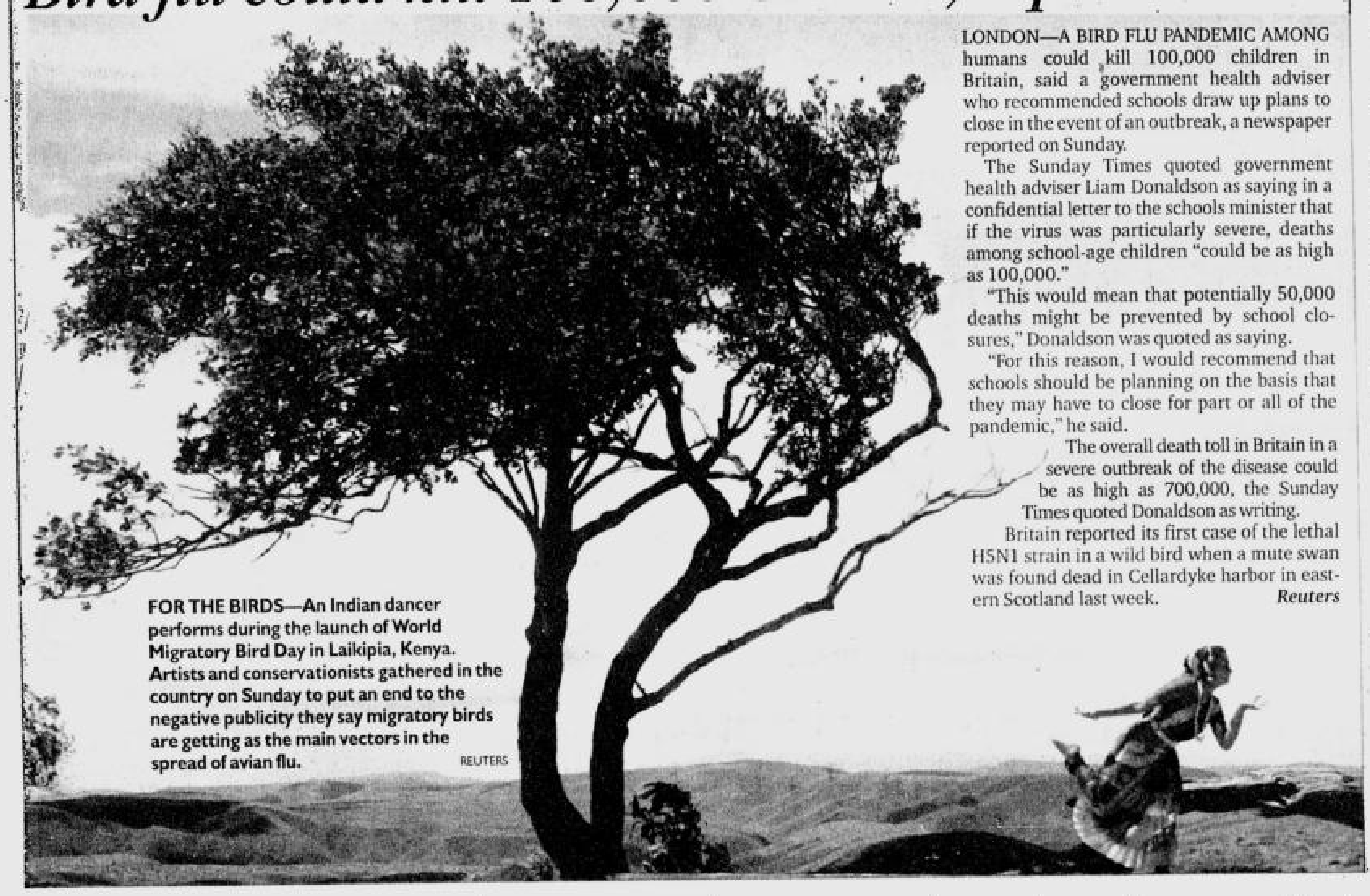
In the essay, in this week's issue of Time magazine, Newbold wrote, "I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat—al-Qaida."

The decision to invade Iraq, he wrote, "was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results."

Though some active-duty officers will say in private that they disagree with Rumsfeld's handling of Iraq, none have spoken out publicly. They attribute their silence to respect for civilian control of the military, as set in the Constitution—but some also acknowledge that it would be professional suicide to speak up.

Newbold served as director of operations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from the summer of 2000 through the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the war in Afghanistan. He left military service in late 2002, as the defense department was deep into planning for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. *NYT*

Bird flu could kill 100,000 UK kids, report warns



FOR THE BIRDS—An Indian dancer performs during the launch of World Migratory Bird Day in Laikipia, Kenya. Artists and conservationists gathered in the country on Sunday to put an end to the negative publicity they say migratory birds are getting as the main vectors in the spread of avian flu. REUTERS

LONDON—A BIRD FLU PANDEMIC AMONG humans could kill 100,000 children in Britain, said a government health adviser who recommended schools draw up plans to close in the event of an outbreak, a newspaper reported on Sunday.

The Sunday Times quoted government health adviser Liam Donaldson as saying in a confidential letter to the schools minister that if the virus was particularly severe, deaths among school-age children "could be as high as 100,000."

"This would mean that potentially 50,000 deaths might be prevented by school closures," Donaldson was quoted as saying.

"For this reason, I would recommend that schools should be planning on the basis that they may have to close for part or all of the pandemic," he said.

The overall death toll in Britain in a severe outbreak of the disease could be as high as 700,000, the Sunday Times quoted Donaldson as writing.

Britain reported its first case of the lethal H5N1 strain in a wild bird when a mute swan was found dead in Cellardyke harbor in eastern Scotland last week. *Reuters*

Great news for crops: Antifreeze gene found

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIAN SCIENTISTS HAVE discovered an "antifreeze gene" that allows Antarctic grass to survive at minus 30 Celsius, saying it could prevent multimillion-dollar crop losses from frost.

"It's a gene from the saltgrass that managed to colonize the Antarctic peninsula called Antarctic Hairgrass," said Professor German Spangenberg from La Trobe University in Victoria state.

"We identified a novel class of a gene protein which binds twice and that prevents ice crystal growth. It has the capacity to survive being frozen rock solid and then thawing. It prevents the damage from ice crystals," Spangenberg said.

The scientists implanted the "ice recrystallization inhibition gene" into a host plant in Australia and replicated the antifreeze properties.

"Now we understand how it works we can use this knowledge for crop improvement, for frost and cold tolerance," said Spangenberg.

Victoria Minister for Innovation John Brumby said the discovery of the "antifreeze gene" could prevent millions of dollars in lost crops due to frost and wintry conditions.

"Over the next few years we should see the development and application of technologies for frost tolerance in crops based on the knowledge gained from the functional analysis of these antifreeze genes," Brumby said in a statement.

Globally, between 5 and 15 percent of agricultural production is lost to frost each year. *Reuters*

Indian farmer kills self over bird flu losses

MUMBAI—AN INDIAN FARMER committed suicide after running up major debts because of tumbling poultry prices caused by bird flu, according to a report Monday.

Small-time farmer Santosh Hirekar, 24, hanged himself using his wife's sari and left a note saying he was unable to feed his birds after prices dropped from 80 rupees ($1.80 dollars) a kilogram to 15, the Hindustan Times reported.

Hirekar's farm is some 150 km from Jalgaon, one of the worst bird flu hit areas in western Maharashtra state, where officials started slaughtering some 300,000 birds last week.

Because his farm was outside the slaughter area, he was unable to claim compensation but was hit by the downturn in chicken prices.

"I don't have money to feed my birds. They are dying. And we don't even get any compensation because our birds are not being culled," the paper quoted a note found in his pocket.

The farmer reportedly had debts of 50,000 rupees and two money lenders had threatened to kill him if he failed to pay up.

The government was investigating the case Monday but a senior official said the farmer had only several hundred birds and said there were probably wider issues at stake.

"I have sent my team to verify the facts," said state animal husbandry commissioner Bijay Kumar. *AFP*

Berlusconi battles for political survival

ROME—POLLS OPENED ACROSS ITALY ON Monday for the final day of voting in a bitter election that could end Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's contentious five-year rule and return the center left to power.

Voting runs from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and exit polls will tell soon after if center-left opposition leader Romani Prodi is to take power leading a wide coalition ranging from Roman Catholic centrists to communists.

Opinion polls gave Prodi, a former prime minister and European Commission president, the edge during a campaign that saw candidates trade insults but left many voters wondering if either side had answers to Italy's woes.

"We must have a change. I voted for Berlusconi last time, but I am voting for Prodi now. Italy has become angry and divided," 81-year old Nello Di Riso said in central Rome.

Already 66.5 percent of Italy had voted on the first day of the polls on Sunday, Italy's interior ministry said, against 81.4 percent at the last general election in 2001 when voting took place on one day.

Opinion polls have not been published in two weeks but Prodi has led the race since returning to Italian politics in 2004 after five years as European Commission head.

Prodi is the only man to have defeated Berlusconi at the polls—in 1996—and gamblers have backed him as a runaway favorite this time around on two popular online betting sites.

Berlusconi is Italy's richest man and Washington's strongest ally in continental Europe and won office in 2001 promising to cut red tape and taxes.

Although the media magnate managed to head the longest-serving administration since World War II, Europe's fourth biggest economy barely grew and lagged its competitors.

Berlusconi's outbursts also regularly riled foreign partners.

A combative Berlusconi waged a fiery campaign, using offensive language to describe opposition supporters, denouncing judges and, in a slap at Prodi's left-wing partners, saying communists under Chinese dictator Mao Zedong boiled babies.

The 69-year-old prime minister offered last-minute tax cuts in the closing days of the campaign, hoping to win over the large number of undecided voters.

He told supporters at his final rally he had overtaken the center left, but his opponents scoffed at the idea.

He even caused a minor stir when he voted on Sunday, drawing a reprimand from a scrutineer after he ignored a campaigning blackout and told his mother to vote for his Forza Italia party.

The 66-year-old Prodi, a former economics professor, has juxtaposed his reputation for seriousness and modest means against Berlusconi's wealth and many lawsuits.

Prodi characteristically made no waves when he voted, and only smiled when a woman told him she would vote for his rival. *Reuters*

SILVIO Berlusconi AP

ROMANO Prodi AP

Protesters defy day curfews across Nepal

KATHMANDU—NEPALESE POLICE firing tear gas and rubber bullets clashed Sunday with thousands of prodemocracy protesters who defied a daytime curfew despite warnings that violators could be shot.

Opposition political parties promised more rallies Monday and later in the week to try to force King Gyanendra to give up his absolute powers, despite hundreds of arrests and the death of three protesters over the weekend.

Home Minister Kamal Thapa said 253 people had been arrested Sunday and blamed the demonstrations on Maoist rebels.

"The ongoing protest program is clearly that of the Maoists," Thapa told reporters. "They are trying to create armed revolution, so the government has been compelled to impose the curfew."

Seven sidelined political parties which organized a four-day strike and protest, in concert with the Maoist rebels, hailed the action and said they would continue beyond Sunday.

"The four-day nationwide general strike was a huge success," the Joint Mass Movement Coordination Committee said in a statement.

"From tomorrow the ongoing demonstrations against the unconstitutional and autocratic regime will continue in Kathmandu and across the country." *AFP*

PNOC
PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Building I, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Telephone Nos.: 893-6001 to 47 local 2104
Direct Line: 840-1614/Fax No.: (632) 840-1619

INVITATION TO APPLY FORELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) through the *CY2006 Corporate Budget* intends to apply the sum of Pesos: Eighteen Million Two Hundred Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred (Php18,211,800.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **On-Call Hauling of Coal and Other Bulk Cargo from Batangas Coal Terminal to Various Clients/BT06-1052** (the "Project"). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PNOC EC now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the On-Call Hauling of Coal and other Bulk Cargo from Batangas Coal Terminal to Various Clients located in San Miguel, Bauan, Batangas. The contract duration for the Project is Six (6) Months.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from PNOC EC Procurement Section (c/o George N. Alejandro) starting April 11, 2006 at PNOC EC Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Pesos: Two Thousand Five Hundred (Php 2,500.00). The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

PNOC EC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **May 3, 2006, 10:00 a.m.** at PNOC EC Batangas Coal Terminal in San Miguel, Bauan, Batangas.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to PNOC EC's Bids and Awards Committee, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, no later than **2:00 P.M. of May 16, 2006**. The bids and eligibility requirements shall be publicly opened at **2:15 of May 16, 2006**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any form stated in the Instructions to Bidders. **Late Bids shall not be accepted.**

PNOC EC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservice.net.

Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—April 11 & 18, 2006)

PNOC
The Energy Company
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO, Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors, registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category B, IAC Medium, Sub-Category A, General Engineering, General Building or Specialties and have completed within the last ten (10) years at least three (3) contracts involving the supply, delivery, and installation of HDPE pipes, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

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The Approved Budget is **PhP 10,703,880.00** chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is **150 calendar days.**

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o F.T. Tolibas local 5179) starting **April 11, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: One Thousand (PhP 1,000.00).**

Site inspection is on **April 20, 2006**. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **April 25, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Application for eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of May 10, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 11 & 18, 2006)

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

SPORTS

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

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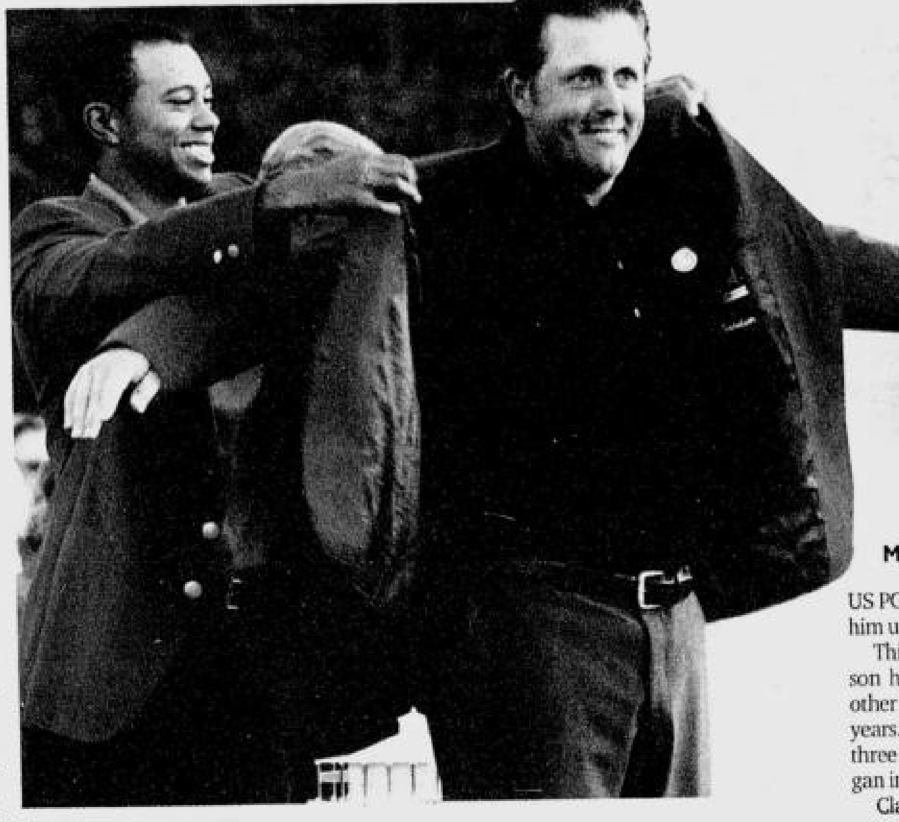
'Lefty' does it right—again

Mickelson nails second victory by 2 at Augusta



LAST year's winner Tiger Woods slips the green jacket on the shoulders of Phil Mickelson (right) after golf's most important left-hander topped the 2006 Masters championship at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, Sunday. Woods settled for third place this time, in a tie with four others. AP

MICKELSON salutes the Augusta gallery after holing out on the 18th green. AP

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—Once known as the lovable loser who went a dozen years before he figured out how to win golf's biggest tournaments, Phil Mickelson captured his second straight major at the Masters on Sunday.

He closed with a 3-under 69 for a two-shot victory over Tim Clark and his second green jacket in three years.

This was nothing like the others.

He holed an 18-foot birdie putt two years ago at the Masters, keeping everyone in suspense until the final moment and sending Mickelson leaping into the air when it finally plopped in. Then there was Baltusrol last summer at the US PGA Championship, when he hit a flop shot out of deep rough to within 2 feet for a birdie to win by one shot.

Instead of a heart-stopping finish this time, he methodically built a lead that forced Fred Couples, Tiger Woods and Vijay Singh to try to catch him. But they stumbled with three-putts and a litany of other mistakes, the kind Mickelson used to make.

"In '04 when I won, I felt this great feeling of relief that I could win the tournament I dreamt about," Mickelson said. "This time, it's a great feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment to have been able to beat such a great field."

The rest of the Big Five was lined up behind him, all within four shots going into the final round.

None could touch him.

Mickelson finished at 7-under 281 and earned $1.26 million, putting him atop the US PGA Tour money list. The victory moved him up to No. 2 in the world behind Woods.

This was the third straight year Mickelson has won a major—Woods is the only other player to have done that in the last 20 years. Only five others have won majors in three straight seasons since the Masters began in 1934.

Clark holed a bunker shot from across the 18th green for birdie that left him alone in second with a 69.

Woods, who was trying to become the first player to twice defend his Masters title, could only blame his putter. He had two eagle putts inside 15 feet on the back nine and missed them both, and he had six three-putts this week. He holed a 25-foot birdie on

'LEFTY'/A21

Fourth round of Masters at a glance

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—A LOOK AT Sunday's final round of the Masters at Augusta National:

- **WINNER:** Phil Mickelson, who shot a final-round 3-under 69 for 281.
- **CLOSE BEHIND:** Tim Clark holed a bunker shot on the 18th hole to finish at 283. Another shot back were five players tied for third place.
- **PHIL'S SECONDS:** Mickelson won a green jacket for the second time in three years, and won his second major in a row. He won the US PGA Championship last year.
- **BIG NUMBER:** Rocco Mediate was two shots off the lead when he stood on the 12th tee. Three balls in the water later, and he made a 10 on the par 3. It was the third highest score on the signature hole in Masters history.
- **KEY STAT:** Before winning the Masters two years ago, Mickelson had not won a major title in 42 tries. He's won three of his last nine.
- **NOTABLE:** Tiger Woods has won 10 majors, but never come from behind on the final day to do it. He was two shots back beginning the final round, and finished three behind.
- **QUOTABLE:** "I didn't hit the ball like I was 46. I putted like I was 66." —*Fred Couples.*

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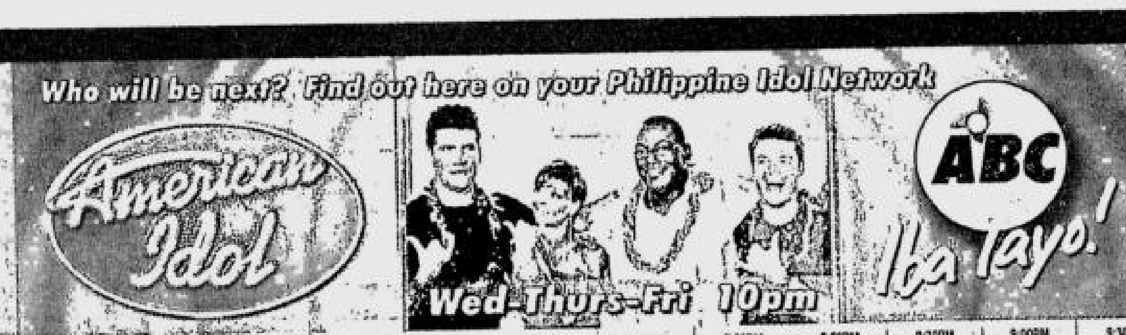
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, March 1[illegible], 2006



Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)	National Geographic	Premier Snooker League				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	TNA Impact		Guinness Book Of Records		Big News	Next Action Star		ALI	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Princess Lulu		Bora			Insider
AXN		Lost (Season II)		House		Sports Disaster VI				Amazon		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		Alias (Season IV)		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Rescue Me	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Camp Lazlo	Coconut Fred's Fruit Salad Island	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		Powerpuff Girls		Mucha Lucha	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Badjao		Mary, Mother Of Jesus				Mano Po				Jologs			Freddy vs. Jason (9:40 PM)	Kahit Isang Saglit			
Cinemax		Gidget Goes To Rome (2:50 PM)			Precious Victims (4:40 PM)				[illegible] (6:20 PM)			Father's Day						Who's Your Daddy?	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence	Law & Order		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Surface		Prison Break		Law & Order Criminal Intent	
Discovery Channel		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Rides		Building The Winter Games		Zero Hour		Wild Discovery		Hour Asia		James Cameron's Expedition: Bismarck				True Crime Scene	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unfabulous Sunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven [illegible]	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '06 [illegible] 9-Ball C'ship		Pool World Pool Masters 2001		Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia		Watersports Programming Hot Water		Atlantic Coast Conf Basketball Boston College Vs W Forest		Sportscenter Asia		Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '06 [illegible] 9-Ball C'ship Finals		Pro Billiards '06 [illegible]		Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Insider Weekend	Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 3		The O.C. 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Super Saints	Angelus ([illegible] PM)	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Mirror Of The Soul	Lord, Have Mercy	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore		Daily Mass Live		Angelus ([illegible] PM)	The Good Code The Natural Law	Cenacle Of Divine Mercy	Octava Dies	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royal Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV		They Call Me Sirr (4:05 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law III		Missing II		Judging Amy		Follow The Stars Home			Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO		The Neverending Story 3: The Next Chapter			[illegible] And Joy (4:45 PM)			The First Wives Club (6:10 PM)				Deadwood 16: Requiem For A Gleet		Deadwood 17: Complications		Win A Date With Tad Hamilton!			Cruel Intentions 3
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter	Soul Hunters	Lost Universe	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Serbis On The Go	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		PBA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family [illegible]	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV			Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	E! News Weekend		Look For Less	Martha		Napa Style	Sheila Bridges Designer Living	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
MTV Philippines		Pimp My Ride		[illegible]	Pop Inc		2006 [illegible] Specials	MTV Hits		Get Spotted	Bing	MTV Hits		TRL		Pimp My Ride		Sessions: Rocksteady	Jams
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts Top 5	Star MYX	OPM MYX Wow!	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten About Asia		Top Of The Pops [illegible] Week: [illegible]	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster		Who's Afraid Of Designer Babies?										Air Crash Investigation: Kid In The Cockpit [illegible]		Seconds From Disaster	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports [illegible]	[illegible]	Teledyaryo [illegible]		Tanging Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				[illegible] OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			The Love Concert				Villa Estrella		[illegible]				[illegible]				[illegible] Professor		
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zenki	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At [illegible]	Irene	Noel	Laugh To Laugh: [illegible]	My Guardian Abby		News On Q	[illegible]	Tuesday Night [illegible]	Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9	TV Shopping					Global Window		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Sports Illustrated Swimsuit [illegible]		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now			
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		[illegible]		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports				All-England Finals			FIG World Cup 2006				NBA Action	NBA Game: Mavericks @ Clippers					Sportsdesk	Asian Badminton Finals	
Sports Plus						Ray Ban Celebrity Poker Challenge				World Game	Rookie Manual	Ultimate Fighting Championship				Gillette World Cup Preview 7	World Poker Tour 2		
Star Movies			[illegible] (3:45 PM)				Hoosiers				Out Of Reach			Mortal Thoughts			The Gathering (10:40 PM)		
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Charmed		The O.C.		North Shore		Seinfeld	Charmed
Studio 23	Bewitched	Naruto				Batman Beyond	Monkey Typhoon	Spirits	TBA	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Gilmore Girls (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		[illegible] World

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Seigle, Antonio share Player of Week plum

COMPLETELY different: Danny Seigle

SAN MIGUEL BEER'S DANNY SEIGLE and Coca-Cola's William Antonio have added new dimensions to their games that have helped move their respective teams to the top of the leaderboard in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup.

Seigle and Antonio are now more than just the scorers they ought to be, propping their squads to the top two rungs and giving their proud coaches All-Star Game jobs in Cagayan de Oro on April 27-29.

The Beermen pace the field with a 7-2 win-loss slate, followed by the Tigers at 6-2 before the Holy Week break. That made sure that San Miguel's Jong Uichico and Coke counterpart Binky Favis will man the bench for the South and North teams, respectively, in the All-Stars.

For helping their teams win two games last week, Seigle and Antonio were named the PBA Press Corps' Gran Matador Brandy-Players of the Week for the period April 3-9.

Both mentors are only too happy with the way the their players have reinvented themselves.

"Danny's offensive prowess is a given," said Uichico. "He has dedicated himself to getting in shape and now he's also playing both ends of the court. He's a completely different player now."

Favis made the same comment about Antonio's transformation.

"He (Antonio) is a good shooter," Favis said. "That's why I keep telling him to take the shot, especially when he's open. Now he's doing a lot more things to contribute."

Antonio had a career-high 18 rebounds and three assists in Coke's 89-85 win over Red Bull last Wednesday.

The 6-foot-3 guard then sizzled with 23 points, just one shy of his career-high, to go with nine rebounds and two assists as the Tigers pulled off a 108-104 win against the Sta. Lucia Realtors last Sunday.

"I have always believed in his talent from the start," said Favis. "That's why I made an effort to squeeze that talent out of him."

Seigle; the tournament's leading scorer, averaged 25.5 points the past week.

The 6-foot-6 Rookie of the Year in 1999 also had six rebounds, four assists, one steal and one block in SMB's 103-94 repeat win over sister team Barangay Ginebra last Sunday. Seigle scored 20 of his 21 points in the second half, helping the Beermen break out of a tight game.

Those numbers came after he recorded his fourth straight double-double—30 points and 12 rebounds—in San Miguel's 93-77 win over Purefoods last Friday.

Painters gun for lead vs Tortillos

RAIN OR SHINE MAY HAVE RECOVERED FROM ITS FIRST LOSS, BUT COACH Leo Austria remains cautious as his Elasto Painters shoot for the solo lead against the Granny Goose Tortillos in the PBL Unity Cup today.

STANDINGS	W	L
Montaña	4	1
R. or Shine	4	1
Toyota Otis	4	1
G. Goose	2	3
Magnolia	2	3
Hapee-PCU	2	3
TeleTech	1	4
Harbour	1	4

GAMES TODAY
(*San Andres Gym*)
2 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs TeleTech
4 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Granny Goose

"All the teams are strong now and Granny Goose is a dangerous team because it has a complete arsenal," said Austria.

The Painters, who share the lead with the Toyota Otis Sparks and the Montaña Pawnshop Jewels, will vie for their fifth win at 4 p.m. at the San Andres Gym in Malate.

Earlier, Harbour Centre shoots for its second straight win against newcomer TeleTech at 2 p.m.

With Jojo Tangkay coming off one of his best all-around performances, the Painters are heavily favored to claim the top spot before the league takes a one-week break in observance of Holy Week.

"I'm satisfied with what Tangkay showed the last time out, he was almost everywhere," said Austria of last conference's Most Valuable Player.

Tangkay delivered 17 points on top of three rebounds, three assists and three steals in Rain or Shine's 71-65 triumph versus TeleTech last Saturday.

Austria also credited Jay-R Reyes, who led the Painters' dominating frontcourt with 10 points and 11 rebounds.

Harbour Centre, too, turned to its own team star to finally end its four-game losing skid last Sunday.

After struggling in his early games, Joseph Yeo powered the Portmasters to an 84-81overtime victory over Granny Goose.

Yeo scored a conference-high 27 points and collected seven rebounds, six assists and three steals. The former La Salle mainstay capped his heroics by nailing a key three-pointer in the final seconds of the extra period.

"We hope this will be the start of our winning streak," said coach Jorge Gallent after Harbour Centre tied TeleTech at 1-4.

The Titans, though, have shown that they can keep pace with the league heavyweights after dropping their last three games by slim margins.

TeleTech fell short in its 71-65 loss versus Rain or Shine, but Mel Latoreno kept his rookie squad within striking distance for a game-high 17 points.

Consistency has also been a problem for the Tortillos, who slipped to 2-3 with Magnolia and Hapee-PCU.

New coach Robert Sison, though, drew some impressive individual performances from his wards, including Alfie Grijaldo, who posted a double-double with 14 points and 12 rebounds.

Jasmine W. Payo

MONTAÑA'S Alex Compton (right) challenges the defense of Rain or Shine's Marvin Ortiguerra in a recent game at the FEU gym. The Jewels won, 60-58. ERIK ARAZAS

New PBA format up; Compton bypassed

By June Navarro

AGREEING TO TWO VALID POINTS RAISED BY the coaches, the Philippine Basketball Association will kick off its next season with the All-Filipino Cup ahead of the import-laden Fiesta Conference.

The league's board of governors approved the format change in a meeting last night after the coaches informed it that the prospect of hiring good imports would be better if the Fiesta Conference was held in the latter part of the season.

The mentors also said that making the All-Filipino the league's opening conference would give the rookies, fresh from the draft, all the time to shine.

"Since there are no imports, the coaches feel that the rookies could be given more playing time," said commissioner Noli Eala.

"On the hiring of imports, most of the tournaments abroad are through by the time the Fiesta (Conference) starts."

Meanwhile, the board deferred its decision again on the bid of American expatriate Alex Compton to finally play as a local in the PBA.

Eala said Compton's case was discussed, but the board failed to arrive at a decision. The governors were said to have asked for time to consult the owners of their respective teams.

Incoming league member Welcoat Paints had earlier made a formal request to include the 6-foot American guard in its lineup.

Eala stressed that Compton's fate lay in the hands of the team owners, adding the league hoped to resolve it at the next board meeting.

Iligan dribblers pip Montaña in OT

VISAYAS DIVISION STANDINGS	W	L
M. Lhuillier-Cebu	3	0
Landmasters-Toledo	2	1
Toyota-Iloilo	0	2
Mantawi Traders	0	2
W. Negros College	x	x
MINDANAO DIVISION		
Iligan City	5	1
PacMan-GenSan	5	2
Montaña-Davao	4	4
Pryce P.-MisOr	3	4
Cagayan de Oro	0	6

MARAMAG, BUKIDNON—ILIGAN City of Mayor Lawrence Cruz hacked out an inspiring 104-97 overtime victory over Montaña Pawnshop-Davao in continuing action from the ML Kwarta Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) First Conference Saturday at the Maramag Municipal Gym.

Steady free throw shooting in the extension proved the key for Iligan, which claimed its fifth win in six games.

Iligan earlier blew a 10-point lead in the last quarter but forged the five-minute extension on a free throw by Erickson Araman, 86-all.

Montaña finished the elimination round with an even 4-4 win-loss card in the tournament backed by ML Kwarta Padala, Nature's Spring Drinking Water, Cokaliong Shipping Lines, Molten, Panasonic and Sulpicio Lines.

The MVBA Maramag games with Moñtana as the "adopted" home team were made possible with the cooperation of the Municipal government of Maramag headed by Mayor Jose V. Obedencio.

In the pre-MVBA exhibition game, team owner Armando Quibod and PBA veteran Noli Banate headlined the Montana Executives as they routed the Maramag Executives, 83-52.

The scores:

ILIGAN 104—Tundag 27, Gloria 25, Bognot 18, Araman 16, Pening 10, Sereno 3, Cosingan 3, Bangloy 2, Pendang 0, Baguio 0.

MOÑTANA-DAVAO 97—Abanes 28, Ayson 17, Butal 13, Bajenting 10, Bonifacio 10, Panerio 7, Dawal 6, Olegario 3, Quibod 3, Coquilla 0, Te 0.

Quarters: 20-23, 45-40, 67-57, 86-86 (reg), 104-97

Friendship

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I MET DR. ANTONIO MA. G. CALANOC IN 1991. It was not until last Sunday, April 9, that we crossed paths again.

Fifteen years, fellas, 15 years. 'Twas that long.

The first time we met, Dr. Calanoc, a dear buddy of the late, well-loved Danny Floro of Crispa, asked: "What happened to you?"

"I guess I broke my elbow, Doc," I said.

I was in his clinic, which was then located at the Capitol Medical Center in Q.C. He's now at the Asian Hospital in Alabang, Muntinlupa, as the center's most sought-after orthopedic and spine surgeon.

"How did it happen," he asked.

"I slipped outside the locker room of Capitol Hills Golf Club."

"So, you play golf, huh?" he said.

"I try to, Doc."

He held my right elbow. I screamed.

"It hurts, Doc," I said.

"I know," he said. "OK, this is what you should do. Have your elbow X-rayed, then come back to me."

I did as told.

When he got hold of the X-ray results, he tacked the X-ray film on the board and said, "See this? A piece of your elbow was chipped off."

I saw the chipped bone which was not longer than one-fourth the size of a regular toothpick. I suffered what the medical profession describes as "chip fracture."

So brilliant a bone surgeon he is, Dr. Calanoc did not see the need for surgery, thereby sparing me the agony of going under the knife (I dread being cut open). Instead, he put a cast on my elbow.

"There," he said after "cementing" my elbow. "You'll be OK soon before you know it."

For nearly four months, I tapped at the keys of my laptop for my column and other stories using only my left index finger. In November of 1991, as the overall commander of the INQUIRER's coverage of the 1991 SEA Games based at the PICC, my colleagues christened me the "One-Armed Swordsman" of sports.

Through it all, I managed to weather the situation. After my treatment, Dr. Calanoc and I parted ways in a rather emotional manner.

A witty fellow who can easily bang a golf ball 300 yards away consistently on a given day, his parting words were, "Let's get in touch, OK? If not, I'd demand that you write to me everyday."

Except for a couple of text messages, maybe, we never communicated nor saw each other again.

Not until April 9, when I brought Mayo to him. Mayo, my 8-year-old grandson, had been suffering five days from neck pain after he played "basketball" using his head as the basketball in a one-on-one against another kid.

As if we'd met only the day before, Dr. Calanoc quickly attended to Mayo, even if it was a Sunday (he does not hold clinic on Sundays. My profuse thanks also go to Dr. Mike Reyes, the ER consultant the day I brought Mayo to the Asian Hospital).

To cut the long story short, my friend of 15 years ago has remained a friend all these years. Immediately, Dr. Calanoc ordered the terribly-in-pain Mayo to be confined "as I want a thorough check-up on the grandson of my friend."

Two days later, Dr. Calanoc, who ordered massive X-rays and a CT scan on Mayo, had gotten word from the expert himself, Dr. Manuel Mejia, the radiologist, that Mayo did not suffer any major injury. As of yesterday, Mayo was started on what Dr. Calanoc said was "a bedside rehab" under Dr. Editha Dizon of Asian Hospital's rehabilitation department.

Boy, was I relieved! The entire family prayed hard anew, thanking our Lord Jesus Christ, no less, and Mother of Perpetual Help.

Who was it who said that friendship knows no distance, no time?

Here's to you, Dr. Calanoc. Indeed, you are what the doctor ordered.

* * *

FASTBREAK. Chito Santos of Bulacan and South Korean Danny Noh, the Philippine Airlines station managers in Bangkok and Seoul, respectively, deserve my highest respects. They never hesitated one bit to extend help when I needed it during my recent trips in their turfs. Mr. Noh even went further as to have me accompanied by Cho Sung-chul, his very polite lieutenant, in surrendering the cell phone that I had rented at the arrival area of the Incheon International Airport in South Korea on April 3. With PAL staffers like them, no wonder PAL flies ever so high "up there."

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

SPORTSWATCH

Coach E cage clinic listing still open

SAN BEDA, ATENEO, DON BOSCO AND XAVIER SCHOOL HAVE SIGNED UP early for the Coach E Summer Basketball Tournament, which is also attracting individual players looking to be part of teams in the month-long tournament starting May 2 at clubsixfifty gym and Xavier. International Basketball Academy (IBA) president Xavy Nunag yesterday said slots in the event backed by Magnolia Chocolait, Burlington, Accel and Smart for players six to 16 years old are still up for grabs. The cage clinics are slated April 22, 23 and 27. "The invitation is still open for high school, village, barangay and community teams, and we are still inviting individual players and small groups to join us," said Nunag. Interested individuals and groups may call 631-1195 or 0921-7562639, or e-mail iba_phil@yahoo.com.

Online registration for rich poker tourney

PLAYERS CAN NOW REGISTER ONLINE FOR THE MAIN EVENT OF THE MILLION-Peso Hold 'em Philippine Championship by visiting its website at www.PhilippinePokerTour.com. The organizing Philippine Poker Tour (PPT) has made this available to players who want to compete in the finals without going through a satellite tournament. The finals is slated April 29 and 30. The Hold 'em Philippine Championship is a non-wager tournament held by the PTT in partnership with Solar Entertainment/Sports-Plus and Pagcor. At stake is the Champion's Bracelet and a prize pot of P1.6 million. Tutorial sessions and more satellite tournaments will be held soon. For inquiries, call the PPT secretariat at 817-9092 or 812-0153.

Mayor Jun Sagun's
Golf Tournament

SAGUN CUP
Trece Martires City Mayor Jun Sagun (left) awards the overall champion's trophy to Raymund Bunquin after the 18-hole fund-raiser at the Sherwood Hills Golf Club recently. Oscar Patricio, Byung Chul and Leni Javier finished 1-2-3 in Division I while Tony Castro, Vicente Que and Romeo Francisco finished 1-2-3 in Division II.

PANGASINAN Hundred Islands' Jovy Sese (white shirt) and North Cotabato's Jonel Jawod get set for the tip-off as Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco makes the ceremonial toss in the Pangasinenses' first home game against North Cotabato in the NBC tournament recently. Behind Cojuangco is Urdaneta City Mayor Amadeo Perez.

62 VICTORIES

Pistons near franchise mark

NEW YORK—TAYSHAUN Prince scored all 17 of his points in the second half as the Detroit Pistons moved to within one win of a franchise record for victories with a 98-73 win over the Indiana Pacers in National Basketball Association play Sunday in Auburn Hills.

Detroit (62-15) needs one more win in its last five games to tie a franchise record for victories in a season, with the Pistons also on the verge of clinching home court advantage for the entire NBA playoffs.

Six players hit double-digits in scoring for the Pistons, who are now 35-3 at home this year.

Lindsay Hunter had 14 points for the Pistons, while Richard Hamilton added 12 points in just 25 minutes.

Ben Wallace pulled down a season-high 22 rebounds and told reporters afterwards that the Pistons are tough to be beat when the club plays defense the way it did Sunday.

"When we come out with that type of focus and energy, it's tough for teams to beat us," he said.

"When we play like that, we make it look easy."

Chauncey Billups and Tony Delk both added 11 points for Detroit, while Antonio McDyess also was in double-figures with 10.

It was a costly loss for the Pacers, who slipped to a season-worst four games under .500, leaving them just one game ahead of Chicago and Philadelphia, who are tied for the last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

Indiana has lost seven of its past eight games.

"We will just not play defense," Jermaine O'Neal told reporters.

"At this point we don't deserve to be in the playoffs."

Stephen Jackson led Indiana with 15 points, while O'Neal added 12.

After a sluggish first quarter the Pistons played a solid game the rest of the way, taking a 10-point lead at the half and increasing it to 20 points after three quarters.

Coach Flip Saunders then emptied his bench to give the reserves playing time, but the Pistons just increased their lead in the fourth to win their fifth straight home game and 21st of his last 22.

In Milwaukee, Jason Kidd recorded his eighth triple-double of the season and 75th of his career as the New Jersey Nets beat the Bucks 95-83.

Vince Carter led New Jersey with 25 points as the Nets rebounded quickly after their 14-game winning streak was ended by Cleveland on Saturday.

T.J. Ford had 19 points for the Bucks, who have lost four straight.

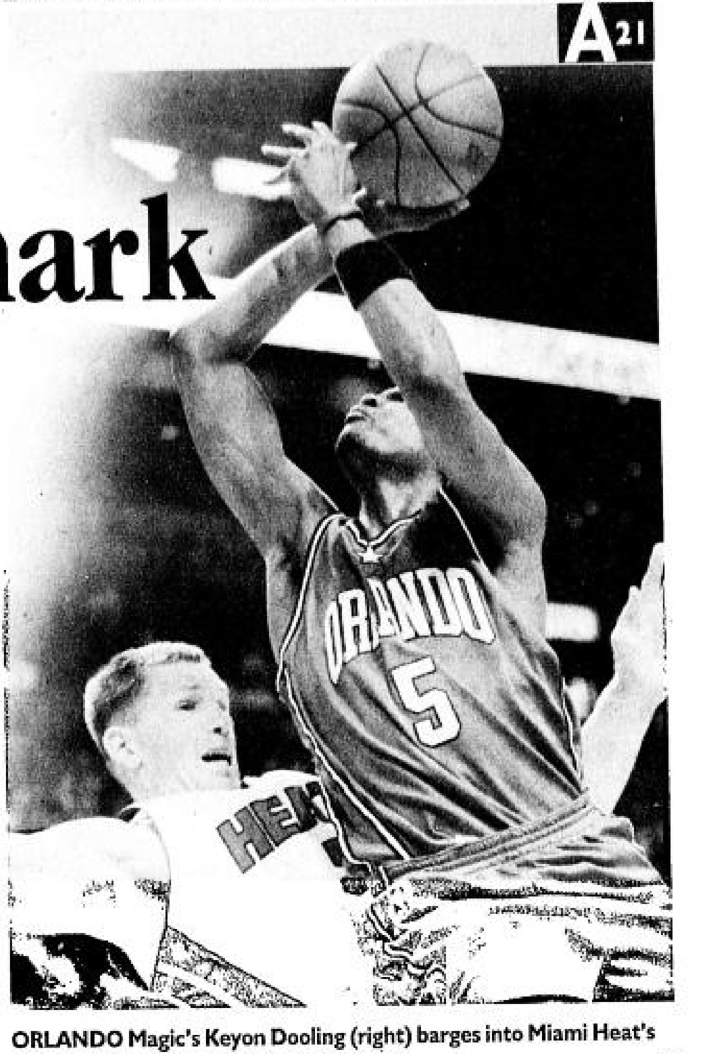
In Minneapolis, Trenton Hassell scored the game-winning basket with 1.9 seconds left to give the Minnesota Timberwolves an 84-83 win over the Atlanta Hawks.

Rashad McCants had 28 points and Mark Blount added 17 for the T-Wolves, who were without Kevin Garnett, who sat out the game with tendonitis in his right knee.

It ended a streak of 351 games without missing a start for the Minnesota star.

Zaza Pachulia had 13 points and 12 rebounds for the Hawks. *Reuters*

SOLAR Sports will air the Dallas-LA Clippers tussle at 11:30 a.m. today.



ORLANDO Magic's Keyon Dooling (right) barges into Miami Heat's Michael Doleac for a charging foul. AP

'Lefty' does it right — again

From page A19

the 18th hole that just about made him curse, although it gave him a 70 and a tie for third.

"I putted atrociously today," Woods said. "As good as I hit it, that's as bad as I putted."

At the green jacket ceremony, Mickelson asked the crowd for a moment of silence to pray for Woods' father, Earl, who could not travel to Augusta for the first time because of cancer.

Joining Woods at 4-under 284 were Couples (71), Retief Goosen (69), Chad Campbell (71) and Jose Maria Olazabal, whose 66 was the best score all week on the super-sized course.

But it was Couples who had the best chance to challenge Mickelson, and had he won, it would have been especially poignant.

This is the 20-year anniversary of Jack Nicklaus' stunning back-nine charge to win his sixth green jacket at age 46. Couples was poised to become the oldest Masters champion—46 years, six months—and he hung with Mickelson until his putter betrayed him.

First came a three-putt on the 11th, his 3-foot par putt spinning around the cup. On the 14th hole, Couples had a 4-foot birdie putt to pull within one shot. It caught the lip and spun 6 feet away, and he missed that one, too.

"I didn't hit the ball like I was 46," Couples said. "I putted like I was 66."

Mickelson poured it on with an eagle chip that caught the lip on the 15th, and steady pars the rest of the way until the 18th.

Then it was off to Butler Cabin, where Woods slipped the green jacket on Mickelson's shoulders.

Mickelson became the first Masters champion since Sandy Lyle in 1988 to win the week before coming to Augusta. Mickelson captured the BellSouth Classic last week by 13 shots.

This tournament was closer, but it sure didn't seem that way.

He took a one-shot lead into the final round by making the fewest mistakes on Sunday morning, when the rain-delayed third round was completed in cool, mostly calm conditions. Mickelson shot 70 and was at 4-under 212, the highest 54-hole score to lead the Masters since 1989. Couples shot 72, making two birdies on the final four holes to get into the final group.

There was a five-way tie for the lead early in the final round—Mickelson, Couples, Campbell, Rocco Mediate and Miguel Angel Jimenez — all at 4 under before making the turn. But it didn't last.

Mickelson took the outright lead with a long pitch to the par-5 eighth that checked up 2 feet behind the hole for birdie, and everyone else either stalled or spiraled, none worse than Mediate who had a 10 on the par-3 12th. *AP*

AMERICAN Andy Roddick reacts after winning the third set against Chile's Fernando Gonzalez during their Davis Cup quarterfinals tennis match Sunday. Roddick won. AP

Argentina hosts Australia; Russia faces US Cuppers

LONDON—ARGENTINA JOINED fierce rivals Australia in the Davis Cup semi-finals on Sunday when Juan Ignacio Chela held his nerve to seal a 3-2 quarter-final victory over injury-hit holders Croatia.

Russia also advanced to the last four thanks to Dmitry Tursunov's tense five-set win over teenager Richard Gasquet of France.

In September's semi-finals Argentina host Australia, who completed a 5-0 whitewash of Belarus earlier on Sunday.

Argentina hammered the Australians 4-1 in an ill-tempered quarter-final last year in Sydney.

Russia will play the United States, who took an unassailable 3-1 lead over Chile in California.

Chela beat Croatian Sasa Tuksar, the world number 159 standing in for the injured Mario Ancic, 3-6 6-4 7-6 7-6 to put the Argentines through to their fourth semi-final in five years.

He fought back from a set down to clinch victory after Croatia's top-ranked player and team captain Ivan Ljubicic hauled the holders level at 2-2 with a 6-3 6-4 6-4 win over David Nalbandian in Sunday's first singles rubber.

Ljubicic confirmed he was stepping down as team captain and said: "We have no regrets as Tuksar played his heart out today and was very unfortunate to lose a very tight match."

France suffered their first defeat in five ties staged in Pau when Tursunov stepped manfully into the shoes of injured compatriot Nikolay Davydenko to expose Gasquet's inexperience.

Tursunov won 6-1 3-6 6-7 6-3 7-5 against the 19-year-old, eventually quelling the Frenchman with his greater power and consistency to give Russia a decisive 3-1 lead.

Mikhail Youzhny then beat Michael Llodra 6-2 4-6 7-6 to wrap up a 4-1 quarter-final win for Russia.

"It would have been more difficult for me if I had not served so well," said Tursunov, who is ranked 34.

"It is hard to describe what I feel because I won the third point, the one sending us through. In Davis Cup, you play for the team and I'm happy to have done what the team was expecting me to do."

Russia also beat France in last year's quarter-finals and the 2002 final in Paris.

"I'm a bit fed up to lose against the Russians," admitted France captain Guy Forget.

Australia had already clinched their semi-final spot by winning the first three rubbers against Belarus.

On Sunday they completed a rout when Wayne Arthurs defeated Sergui Tarasevitch 7-6 6-2 and Chris Guccione earned a crushing 6-1 6-3 win over Belarussian rookie Alexandr Zotov.

Australian number one Lleyton Hewitt has had several run-ins with Argentine players and looking ahead to the semifinals.

Andy Roddick defeated Chile's Fernando Gonzalez 4-6 7-5 6-3 6-2 in Rancho Mirage to guide the United States into the semis.

World number four Roddick withstood a spirited early charge from Gonzalez, who was serving brilliantly and controlling play from the backcourt. *Reuters*

Red Sox, Yankees hurdle opponents

BALTIMORE—TIM WAKEFIELD pitched six perilous innings without allowing an earned run, leading the Boston Red Sox past the Baltimore Orioles 4-1 for a three-game sweep in the American League on Sunday.

Adam Stern drove in two runs for the Red Sox, whose 5-1 start is their best since 1999. Boston outscored Baltimore 20-10 in the series and has won eight straight against the Orioles.

For the Red Sox, the best part about their good start is that it occurred on the road. Boston plays its home opener Tuesday against Toronto.

"I think Fenway will be jumping. It's a great way to go home," Boston manager Terry Francona said.

Wakefield (1-1) retired the side in order only once. The knuckleballer twice worked out of bases-loaded jams, and stranded 10 runners before leaving with a 4-1 lead. He lowered his ERA from 17.18 to 6.52.

"He's tough when he's got that thing moving, so as an offense you have to start trying to get base hits and not overswing," Orioles manager Sam Perlozzo said. "Sometimes we get a little too anxious. We needed to take what he gives us." *AP*

Complete results: LA Dodgers 6, Philadelphia 2; Cleveland 3; Minnesota 2; PW 6, LA Dodgers 3; Tampa Bay 5, Toronto 2; NY Mets 3, Florida 2; Pittsburgh 5, Cincinnati 3; Boston 4, Baltimore 1; Arizona 7, Milwaukee 0; Texas 5, Detroit 3; Houston 7, Washington 3; Chicago White Sox 3, Kansas City 1; NY Yankees 10, LA Angels 1; Oakland 6, Seattle 4; Colorado 10, San Diego 4; San Francisco 6, Atlanta 5; Chicago Cubs 8, St. Louis 4.

IRON MAN: Tomoaki Kanemoto, 38-year-old outfielder of the Hanshin Tigers, shows off a plate commemorating his 904th straight game without missing an inning at Osaka Dome, Japan, April 9. Kanemoto set the unofficial world record of durability on Sunday after tying the Major League baseball record of 903 games by Cal Ripken Jr. Saturday. REUTERS

Wang wants China stint

BEIJING—CHINESE NBA PIONEER Wang Zhizhi returned home on Monday after a four-year exile, humbly declaring his desire to play again for China after his career in the world's biggest league was cut short.

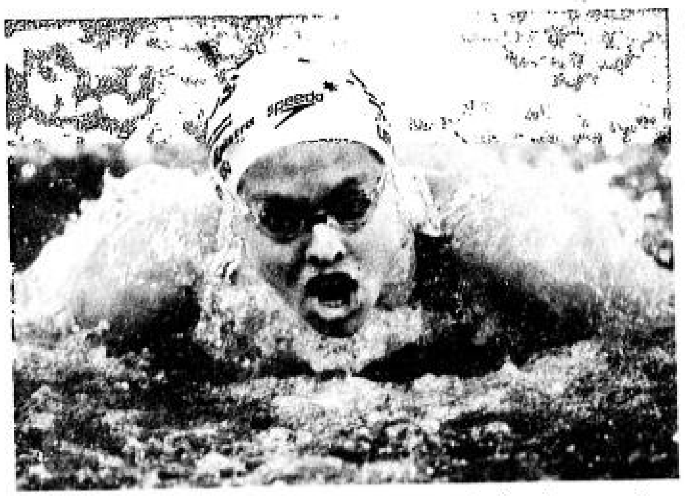
"I realized I made a big mistake," the Xinhua news agency quoted the 2.12-meter (seven-foot) center as saying after arriving at Beijing airport, in reference to his decision to forsake national duties in preference for the NBA.

"I want to say sorry to my fans and to the Bayi team which trained me and gave me the chance to play in the NBA."

Wang became the first Chinese cager to play in the National Basketball Association when he made his debut with the Dallas Mavericks in 2002.

But he was expelled from China's national team after he refused to represent his country in the 2002 Asian Games in South Korea, and he had remained in the United States since. *AFP*

Aussie swimmers boost stock; Chinese move up



AUSTRALIA'S Lisbeth Lentona on her way to winning the women's 100 meter butterfly final in a time of 56.61, during the final day of the 8th FINA World Short Course Swimming Championships. AFP

SHANGHAI—AUSTRALIA'S WOmen added to their towering reputation at the World Short-Course Swimming Championships while China showed signs of a renaissance ahead of the Beijing Olympics.

Sprint queen Libby Lenton took five titles, matching her performance at last month's Commonwealth Games, as Australia easily topped the medals table with 12 gold medals ahead of the United States on six.

Lenton, who burst onto the scene with three gold medals at last year's long-course World Championships, warned that the Australian women were just getting started.

"I know I have a lot to learn and improve and it's the same with the rest of the girls, which is pretty exciting leading into the 2008 Olympic Games," said the 21-year-old.

Both the United States and Australia were missing their biggest stars with Michael Phelps, Aaron Piersol, Grant Hackett and Ian Thorpe all bypassing the event.

But Australia brought an almost full-strength women's line-up that cleaned up with eight titles.

The men's team, under pressure after their Commonwealth Games flop, were left to rely on veteran Matt Welsh, who scored an individual hat-trick and helped win the 4x100m medley relay.

The United States struggled without its biggest names but unearthed a gem in 21-year-old Ryan Lochte, who broke two world records in the 200m backstroke and 200m medley.

Ryk Neethling carried South Africa, whose top performer Roland Schoeman pulled out at the last minute, with three individual titles.

"I've had a very good season and this is the icing on the cake," he said.

But it was China that grabbed attention with three wins on the final night to finish third on the medals table.

China has failed to perform on the world stage after a series of doping scandals since the mid-1990s but is placing a strong emphasis on aquatics ahead of the next Olympics.

"This is a beautiful show," said head coach Zhang Yadong. *AFP*

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Angel Sky (5), Real Magic (4), Princess Ther Thar (6), Iron Chef (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Daddy' Girl (5), Shifty (8), Money Maker (7), God Is Good (6), Guided Missile (1)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Wine And Roses (2), Miss Vicky (7), King Aljhun (5), Smiling Jaeda (4)
Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Jayvie's Godfather (10), Elegant Fashion (7), Lady Be Gold (6), Special Lad (1), Morning Glory (9), Color Of The Wind (4)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Virgin Island (2), Tribeca (5), Dixie Dash (3), Saint Bernard (4)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Power Dance (3), Cool Operator (4), Mika Mix (9), Money For Shelltex (5), Long Hitter (6)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—American Inggo (3), Don King (1), Mr. Bonjing (7), Big Boss (8)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Overture (7), Smile Of The Wind (4), Golden Harry (1), Speed King (8), Dow Jones (9)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ingay Ingay (10), Skip Away/Real Charm (4), Sandok (6), Bomb Shell (11), Mary Jane Bomb (7), Sovereign Dancer (8)

SO: In contention

Laylo keeps lead; Yap stuns Gonzales

NATIONAL MASTER DARWIN LAYLO BEAT NM Roderick Nava in the eighth round Monday to keep the solo lead in the 2006 National Chess Championship finals for men and women at the Market Shopping Mall in Mandaluyong City.

Following a draw with NM John Paul Gomez in the seventh round last Sunday, Daylo boosted his total to 7.0 points and moved closer toward earning a slot in the Chess Olympiad set in Turin, Italy, next month.

"It's still hard to predict because there's a long way to go," said Laylo, who won after 46 moves of a Reti Opening. "I just have to stay focus.".

The men's event staking three berths is slated for 13 rounds while the distaff side is set for 11 rounds. Grandmasters Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Joey Antonio have been seeded to the men's team by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines headed by Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay.

Gomez, the two-time RP junior champion, sealed another draw with NM Mirabeau Maga in 15 moves of an English Opening to tally 6.5 points and share 2nd to 5th places with Maga and Fide Masters Oliver Dimakiling and Jesse Noel Sales.

Cebu's Kim Steven Yap edged GM candidate Jayson Gonzales in the seventh round and drew with Sales in the eighth to tie GM Buenaventura Villamayor, IM Ronald Dableo, IM Petronio Roca, FM Wesley So, NM Rolando Nolte and NM Julius Joseph de Ramos at 6.0 points.

Woman International Master Sheerie Joy Lomibao trounced Chardine Charadee Camacho after 30 moves of a Torre Attack to share the lead after seven rounds in the distaff side.

Lomibao was at 5.5 points with WNM Catherine Perena, sisters and WNMs Sherily and Shercilla Cua and WNM Loreshyl Cuizon.

NM Marlon Bernardino

Taguig five regains old form, rips Sta. Rosa

NORTHERN DIVISION STANDINGS	W	L
Spring-P'ñaque	2	1
Batang Tagaytay	1	1
Forward Taguig	1	1
Pangasinan	1	2
Bacchus/Harbour	1	2
Laguna-S. Rosa	0	3

TAGUIG CITY—Forward Taguig flashed its old form to rout the Laguna-Sta. Rosa Pistons, 89-75, Sunday night in the Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the CP Tinga gym here.

With their first win in two games, Mayor Freddie Tinga's Taguig cagers tied idle Batang Tagaytay for second place in the northern division while dealing the Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro and Mayor Joey Katindig their third straight loss.

After a slow start which saw them ahead by only four, 42-38, at the turn, coach Danny Gavierres' Taguig boys exploded with 24 points while limiting their rivals to 10 in the third period to break the contest wide open.

The tourney sponsored by Panasoic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel takes a Holy Week break. Action will resume on April 18 here with Laguna-Sta. Rosa facing Batang Tagaytay at 4 p.m. and Spring Cooking Oil-Parañaque meeting Forward Taguig at 6.

The scores:

TAGUIG 89—Gragasin 19, Victoria 14, Abad 11, Legaspi 8, Santiago 6, Lustestica 6, Constantino 5, Castro 4, Patrimonio 4, Uy 3, Dulay 3, Dela Rosa 2, Acion 2, magsambol 2.

LAGUNA 75—Nuqui 20, Domingo 13, Proceso 11, Intano 9, Alminario 7, Natividad 6, Uy 4, Nolasco 2, Baylon 0.

Quarters: 19-18, 42-38, 66-48, 89-75.

Final day kick from jins give Malate crown

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MEDAL STANDINGS	G	S	B
Malate	59	57	65
Abad Santos	51	51	30
Dapitan	50	42	37
Binondo	43	28	20
Paco	33	25	30
Sta. Cruz	32	22	28
Pandacan	31	30	27
Ermita	19	19	31
Sta. Ana	18	18	12
Espana	14	13	13

MALATE LITERALLY GOT a final day kick from its taekwondo jins Sunday night, leapfrogging from the bottom half of the standings to the overall championship of the fifth Manila Youth Games at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Representing the fifth district of Manila, Malate won 35 of the 60 gold medals disputed in the final day and totaled 59-gold, 57-silver and 65-bronze medals to nip Abad Santos for overall honors.

Malate's bets from the Manila Taekwondo Club, PTA Central Gym and Phil. Taekwondo Contingent dominated taekwondo action, considered as the highlight of the week-long event organized by the Manila Sports Council headed by Ali Atienza.

Abad Santos, from District 2, was leading the medal tally until noon Sunday only to falter in taekwondo and lose the gains it had in athletics, gymnastics and swimming. The contingent settled for second place with a 51-51-30 tally.

Malate was in eighth place overall before the start of taekwondo action.

And its bets started the domination by holding its own over powerhouse teams University of the East and University of Santo Tomas, which still accounted for seven and five golds medals, respectively.

"We are already starting to identify which area in the city could deliver in which sport," Atienza said. "That would help a lot in focusing our funds and energy for sports development in Manila."

Promising athletes discovered from the Games include Ingrid Illustre of swimming and Joselito Vinluan of the Pandacan-based Manila Seahawks. Both captured nine gold medals each and were proclaimed Best Performers of the meet.

Mage Wagan and Bleau Berry Gulfan of Abad Santos High School won five golds each in gymnastics along with trackster Emerlyb Ellesca.

JENNESSE Pearl Paolite of PCU rules the women's long jump event. RODEL ROTONI

SPORTS FESTIVAL
Tanauan City Mayor Sonia Torres Aquino makes the ceremonial break in billiards, launching the Tanauan Sports Festival last week. The event features hundreds of city residents who will vie in at least six events. To Ms Aquino's right is Tanauan sports commissioner Totie Leus. The launching coincided with the mayor's birthday.

FBL clinics with Banal

MULTI-TITLED COACH JOEL BANAL, who has led different teams to the NCAA, UAAP and the PBA championships, will be one of the key personalities behind the Futures Basketball Camp (FBC) set to start April 19 at the Victoria's Place Subdivision Clubhouse basketball gym in Pasig City.

Banal, who was head coach of Talk 'N Text up to early this year, will be camp consultant while Bong Go serves as camp director.

The basketball camp is presented by Primovit Multi-vitamins and capsules and supported by Dunlop Balls, Adidas, Gatorade, and Sta. Lucia Property Management Corp., is open to boys and girls, 8 to 14 years old and runs for 10 sessions of 2 hours each until May 2.

Camp fee is P2500 for the 10 lessons. For inquiries, contact FBC coordinator Glenn de Leon, 0915-5948308, and Franzi Britton, Futures office, 411-5065.

Underwater hockey clinic

PIONEER PROMOTER OF UNDERWATER hockey in the Philippines and NAUI Instructor/Lifetime member, Boying Santos-Viola, will be conducting an 8-day Level 1 Underwater Hockey Clinic. The course will be a combination of 1.5-hr lectures with training videos and poll sessions totaling to 12 hours of fun-filled instructions. Training dates will be from April 18 to May 25. Underwater hockey is an exhilarating team building activity and a great alternative sport to swimming and scuba diving. For details, call Boying at 9278492 or 09215014550.

Esguerra, Puyat top earners again

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I ADMIRE PEOPLE IN SPORTS WHO achieved success by dint of hard work, sports men who rose to celebrity status because they are honest and fair in dealing with their fellowmen. Two of these achievers are horse owners-breeders Hermie Esguerra and Putch Puyat, who emerged—for the umpteenth time—horse racing's leading money earners.

According to the Philippine Racing Commission, the governing body for the sport, Esguerra leads the money race with total winnings of P4,486,683.71 as of February this year, while Puyat is second with total earnings of P3,225,425.73.

Known to the legions of racing fans as the owner of super horse Wind Blown, Esguerra is at the top of the Philracom list after 85 races with 17 first-place victories, 19 runner-up finishes, 15 third and nine fourth places.

On the other hand, Puyat took second after 86 runs with 14 victories, 10 runner-up finishes, eight third and 14 fourth places.

A perennial top money earner since 2001, Esguerra said he just wanted to find a new diversion when he got hooked on horse racing. "But I really got serious with my involvement in racing in 2001, when I acquired Wind Blown, then already a champion horse, from Sandy Javier," said the dapper sportsman whose other favorite sports are golf and basketball.

Now happily retired to stud, Wind Blown won record earnings of P18,978,695.50 in 49 starts since launching his career in 1999 as a two-year-old galloper. Esguerra is now pinning his hopes on another premier horse, the four-year-old chestnut colt Real Spicy. However, a reported "breakup" with trainer Andrew Sanchez, a former Philracom chair, has sent Real Spicy to a new trainer, Jojie Panlilio. Ditto the other horses trained by Sanchez to the pool of Herma Stable trainers.

Puyat is best remembered for having served as president of the prestigious Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners for a total of 15 years (seven straight from 1986 to 1992 and eight from 1996 to 2005). He is likewise noted for his other contributions to sports such as bowling (where he, together with elder brother Popit, supported four-time World Cup champion Paeng Nepomuceno) and billiards where he bankrolled the successful campaign of the Philippine men's and women's squads in last year's 23rd Southeast Asian Games, and the international stint of the star-studded Puyat Sports team led by Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan.

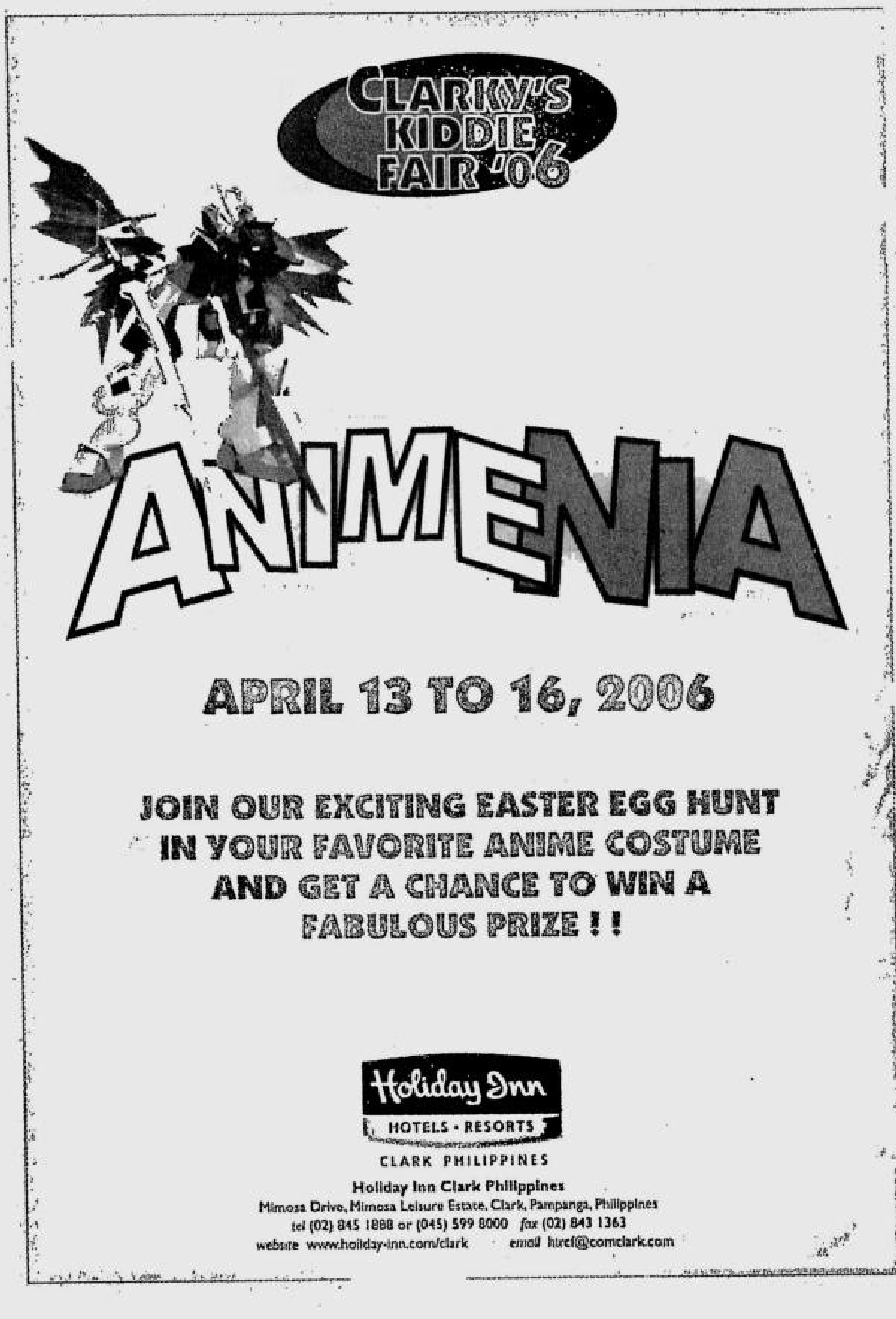
Puyat is one of a kind. Born to an old-rich and politically prominent family, he is surprisingly approachable, soft-spoken and humble. "My first love is horse racing," he said, adding he wasn't even keen on billiards before. But all this changed when he started sponsoring Bata Reyes and Co. in the early 1980s. Since then, Puyat has been acting as a second father to the players, most of whom were school dropouts, by guiding them in handling their earnings and teaching them how to dress properly (I was told he even requested Reyes to wear long sleeve shirts during the recent launching of the 2006 Wold Pool Championship at the Manila Hotel. Reyes did not disappoint.

In the Philracom money derby, lawyer Edmond Moreno is third with total winnings of P2,931,740.77 after 86 races on 11 wins, nine second, 13 third and 11 fourth places. Also in the top 20 are Nardy Naval, P2.64 million; Tony de Ubago, P2.45 million; Eric Tagle, P2.09 million; Antonio Floirendo Sr., P1.95 million; KLN Express, P1.94 million; Ed Gonzalez, P1.83 million; Jun Almeda, P1.83 million; Narciso Morales, P1.78 million; PBA player Paolo Mendoza, P1.73 million; Red 'N Stable, P1.63 million; Romy Hernandez, P1.56 million; Honorato Neri, P1.55 million; Grace Coronel, P1.52 million; David Lee, P1.5 million; Jun Paman, P1.49 million; Mario Tan, P1.47 million; and Jaime Zulueta, P1.366 million.

Philracom chair Jaime Dilag cited the horse owners-breeders for their full support to the racing industry, including the sport's direct players like the jockeys, trainers, stakes race sponsors and the racing public.

***

SPORTS' WALK OF FAME. My *suki*, Paul Mortel of Marikina City, wrote recently: "The movie industry has already started implementing its 'Walk of Fame' project at Eastwood. When will the sports community start its own 'Walk of Fame' project? If and when this worthy project will be implemented by the sports people, allow me to give a list of sports heroes who deserve to be in this 'Walk of Fame.' Here is that list not necessarily in their order of importance: Flash Elorde, Robert Jaworski, Anthony Villanueva, Onyok Velasco, Manny Pacquiao, Alvin Patrimonio, Ambrosio Padilla, Lydia de Vega, Elma Muros, Paeng Nepomuceno, Danny Florencio, Ramon Fernandez, etc."



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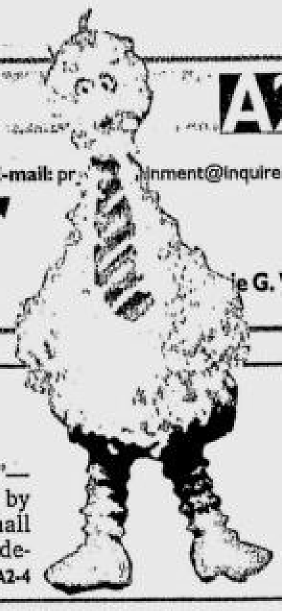

Trouble on Sesame Street

NEW YORK—THE CREATORS of the children's program "Sesame Street" are releasing a new line of videos Tuesday targeted for viewers as young as six months, outraging some child-development experts who feel no form of TV or video is suitable for kids under 2.

The DVDs—part of a series called "Sesame Beginnings"—are intended to be watched by parents along with their small children. Sesame Workshop de-

TROUBLE/ A2-4

SHELDON Bailey: "We were told the level of talent in the Philippines is fantastic." RODEL ROTONI

'Idol' producer leads RP team

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

AS A SUPERVISING PRODUCER of the "Idol" franchise, Briton Sheldon Bailey has seen fire and rain—and everything in between—in the four corners of the world.

"In Southeast Asia, it's very hot," she recalled. "I was in Norway, near the Arctic Circle, last December and it was minus 23. Still, the girls were in skimpy dresses! They would do anything, including travel 13 hours in ferries across fjords [to audition]!"

Massive

She's also been to strife-torn territories in the Middle East and former European communist countries.

"'Idol' is massive in Eastern Europe," she said. "We have Polish, Croatian, Serbian and Russian Idols. We're everywhere. We're now in 35 countries."

Bailey and three other supervising producers in FremantleMedia are called "flying producers" because they travel all over the globe, to "coordinate and serve as consultants to the local production teams."

She has been assigned to "Philippine Idol," which premieres on ABC 5 in July.

She was in Manila last week to lay the groundwork for the local version of the hugely popular reality talent search.

Before arriving in Manila, she was in France, Portugal, Poland, Germany, Israel and Canada.

"I'm currently doing my Asian Idol tour," she told INQUIRER Entertainment. "From Singapore, I flew to the Philippines and then I'll go to Indonesia."

In these countries, franchisees follow an "Idol" manual, dubbed a "bible," to the letter.

"We are very protective of the 'Idol' format because it works," she explained. "We prefer that everyone stick to the basic structure. However, within the structure, we can adapt."

She cited as examples the varying names of the series in different countries—a result of their compliance to local customs, traditions and religions.

In Arabic countries, the "Idol" show is called "Superstar" so as not to offend the Islamic faithful, she said. "We also call it 'Superstar' in Germany because the German word for 'Idol' is close to *Fuhrer*."

The Arabian show "shocked people," she recounted. "Politicians debated about it in the Parliament in Jordan. Our team received death threats from the Hamas, until the Palestinian Islamist organization relented because of the show's popularity."

The countries' musical genres are also respected and highlighted in local versions.

For the "Philippine Idol," Original Pilipino Music will be showcased extensively.

Six months

"When I was in Singapore, they told me that the level of talent in the Philippines is fantastic," she recalled. "In the original 'Pop Idol' in England we had 700 hours of audition footage from three cities."

Considering the wealth of talent in the Philippines, the local production team could potentially face, "thousands of hours of footage . . . The team will have no lives for the next six months," she said, laughing.

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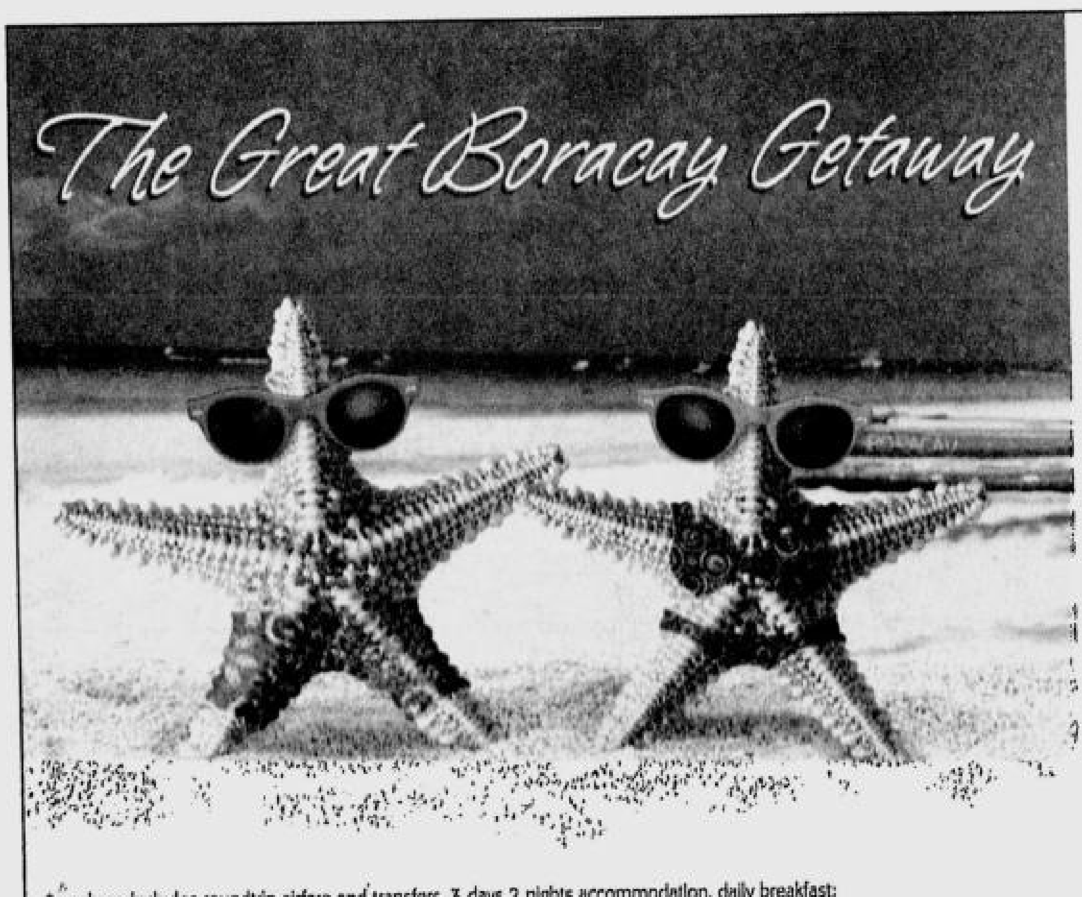

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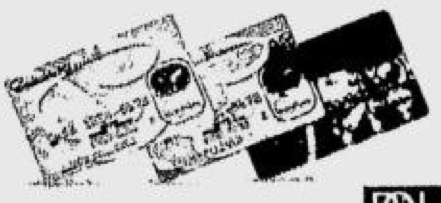
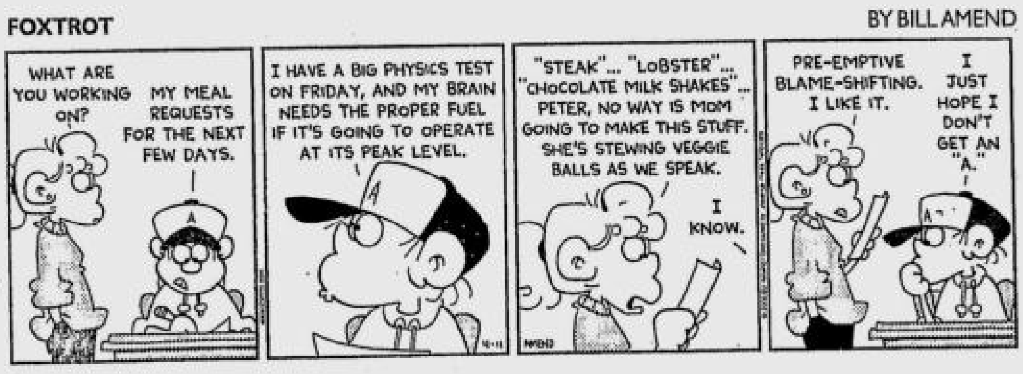
PAL CAIR



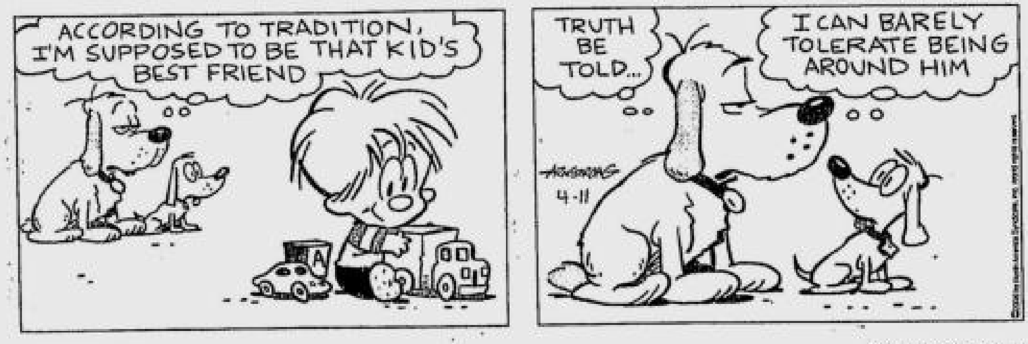
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?
MY MEAL REQUESTS FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.
I HAVE A BIG PHYSICS TEST ON FRIDAY, AND MY BRAIN NEEDS THE PROPER FUEL IF IT'S GOING TO OPERATE AT ITS PEAK LEVEL.
"STEAK"... "LOBSTER"... "CHOCOLATE MILK SHAKES"... PETER, NO WAY IS MOM GOING TO MAKE THIS STUFF. SHE'S STEWING VEGGIE BALLS AS WE SPEAK.
I KNOW.
PRE-EMPTIVE BLAME-SHIFTING. I LIKE IT.
I JUST HOPE I DON'T GET AN "A."

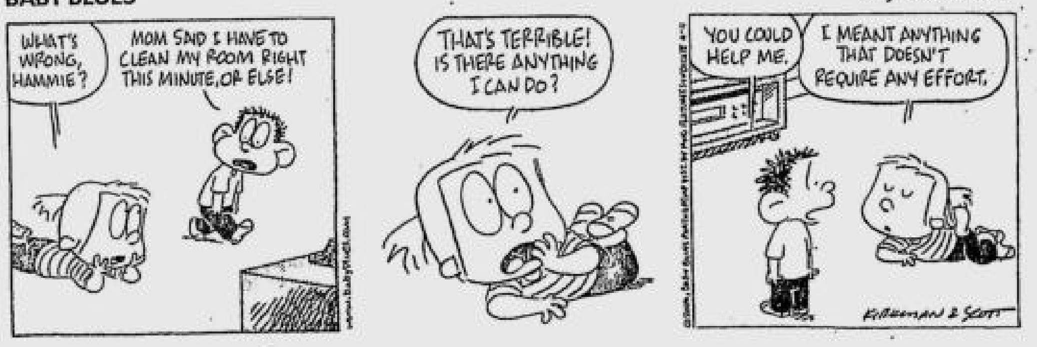
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


ACCORDING TO TRADITION, I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THAT KID'S BEST FRIEND
TRUTH BE TOLD...
I CAN BARELY TOLERATE BEING AROUND HIM
4-11

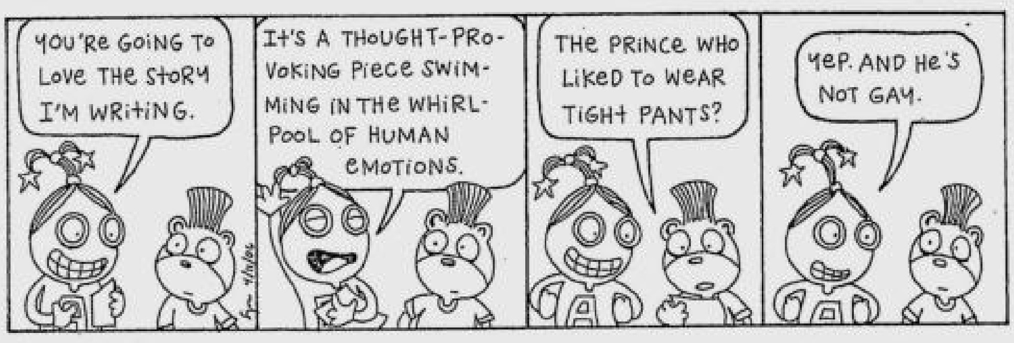
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S WRONG, HAMMIE?
MOM SAID I HAVE TO CLEAN MY ROOM RIGHT THIS MINUTE, OR ELSE!
THAT'S TERRIBLE! IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?
YOU COULD HELP ME.
I MEANT ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T REQUIRE ANY EFFORT.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE THE STORY I'M WRITING.
IT'S A THOUGHT-PROVOKING PIECE SWIMMING IN THE WHIRLPOOL OF HUMAN EMOTIONS.
THE PRINCE WHO LIKED TO WEAR TIGHT PANTS?
YEP. AND HE'S NOT GAY.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Basically, you are a wise person. You are practical, and you know how to be useful. You don't crave publicity, but you often get it because you're so capable. You have strong diplomatic skills and work well with others. The year ahead could bring major changes, perhaps as significant as whatever took place in 1997. Be prepared to go with the flow.

Birthdate of: Peter Riegert, actor; Joss Stone, singer; Joel Grey, performer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Please remember that this is your special time of year! It's all about you now. Recharge your batteries, and make a list of what you want to accomplish in the coming year.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Continue to seek out opportunities for solitude. As your year comes to an end (before your upcoming birthday), now is the time to look back and give yourself a report card on how you're doing.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): We need our friends and associates. They help us define who we are. Give some thought today to the kind of friends you want to have in your life.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): People notice you now because the Sun is at high noon in your chart. This acts like a spotlight on you. Why not use this to your advantage? Lobby for what you want!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Now is the time to study new subjects or explore opportunities in travel and publishing. You want more out of life—so go get it!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your research skills are tops right now. Bills, jointly held property, taxes and debt need your attention. Sort out as much as you can.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Get more rest this week. The Sun gives you energy, and right now it is as far away from your sign as it will get all year.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Since you have a burst of energy to get better organized and work hard now, do so! Capitalize on this blessing. Make hay while the Sun shines.

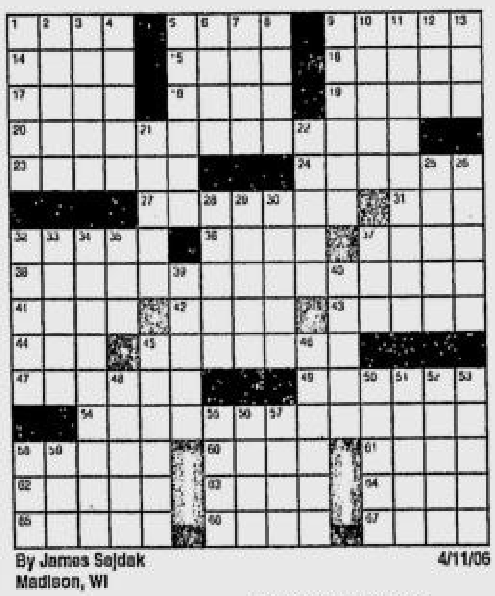
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a creative time for you! Love, romance, fun and pleasure are in the air. Time spent with children is important. Make plans for a vacation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You value home and family in a traditional way. They provide an emotional, tangible security for you. Talk to family members today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This busy pace will not stop for at least a few weeks, so get used to it. Read, write, study and talk to siblings. Communication is important now.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): What will make you happy? What will it take? Think about this today. If you don't define these goals, how will you know when you reach them?

DAILY CROSSWORD



By James Sajdak
Madison, WI
4/11/06

ACROSS
1 Tough to crack
5 Dames
9 Plant pest
14 River to the Baltic
15 Potpourri
16 Slalom incline
17 Start from scratch
18 Table extension
19 Beauty shop
20 A piece
23 Inscribed stone slabs
24 Break
27 Skin diver's device
31 Naut. heading
32 Beatles and Monkees combined
36 Start a new hand
37 Assistant
38 A piece
41 Unobstructed
42 Senator Feingold
43 Fails to win
44 NASA's ISS partner
45 Cleric's cap
47 Fine point
49 Set sail
54 A piece
58 Buffalo ice skater
60 Bowed
61 Tiny bit
62 No longer squeaking
63 Maine seaport
64 La Scala showstopper
65 Shift or muumuu
66 Blackthorn
67 Stagger

DOWN
1 Son of Osiris
2 Very skilled
3 Touch-up color job
4 Go ga-ga
5 Kind of calf or boy
6 On the sheltered side
7 Whopper peddler
8 Long, upholstered seat
9 Lay into
10 Baja beach
11 Friesland cows
12 NYSE entry
13 Cozy room
21 Villainous
22 Cover with water
25 Not justified
26 Appears
28 Smell of Britain?
29 Put into service again
30 Sinkhole terrain
32 Killed, mobster-style
33 Ajaccio's island, to inhabitants
34 Responsive to medication
35 Nice summer?
37 In the past
39 Ruffled border
40 San Antonio mission
45 Upright walkers
46 Acquire canines
48 __-ski
50 Pipe root
51 Love to pieces
52 Lace all over
53 African stockade
55 Outflows of the tide
56 Ring out
57 "__ every life, a little rain..."
58 Turf piece
59 Ventilate

Monday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	B	A	L	■	A	B	B	A	■	C	L	A	P
O	R	A	T	E	■	D	E	E	M	■	L	O	B	E
M	O	N	T	G	O	M	E	R	Y	■	A	G	A	R
E	D	G	E	■	L	I	T	T	L	E	R	O	C	K
■	■	■	S	T	A	T	S	■	■	R	I	N	K	S
D	E	L	T	A	■	■	■	S	P	A	N	■	■	■
R	A	E	■	R	E	S	A	L	E	■	E	S	A	I
U	S	S	T	A	T	E	C	A	P	I	T	A	L	S
M	E	T	E	■	T	E	E	T	E	R	■	Y	A	P
■	■	■	L	E	E	R	■	■	■	M	E	S	S	Y
E	T	H	E	L	■	■	■	S	A	T	A	N	■	■
P	R	O	V	I	D	E	N	C	E	■	D	A	D	A
S	I	M	I	■	C	H	A	R	L	E	S	T	O	N
O	N	E	S	■	C	U	R	E	■	L	U	R	E	D
M	I	R	E	■	I	D	E	S	■	S	P	A	R	S

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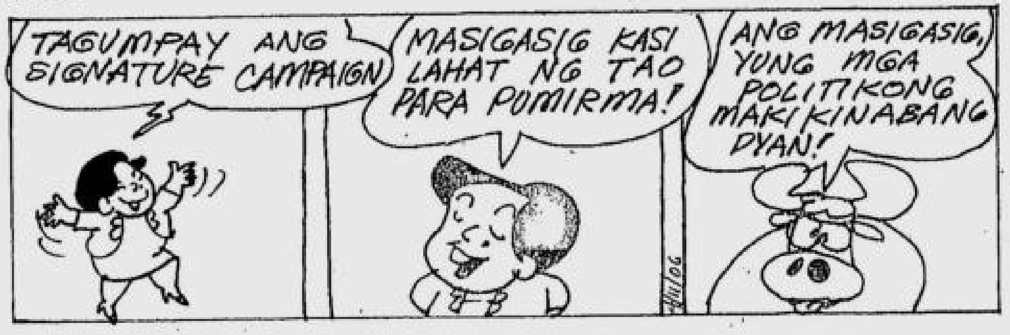
4/11/06

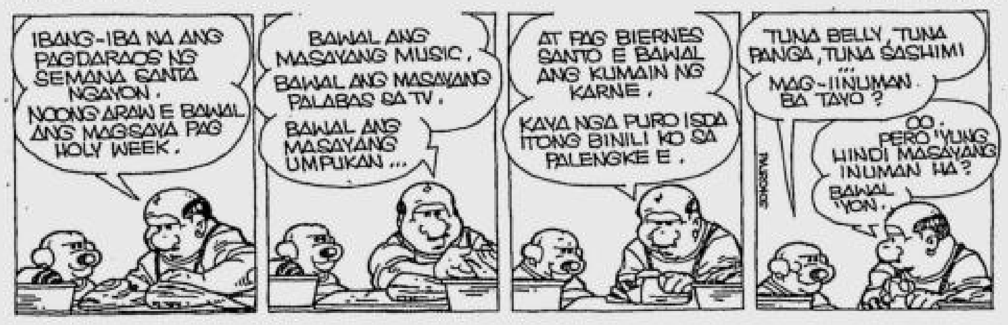
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TAGUMPAY ANG SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN
MASIGASIG KASI LAHAT NG TAO PARA PUMIRMA!
ANG MASIGASIG, YUNG MGA POLITIKONG MAKIKINABANG DYAN!
4/11/06

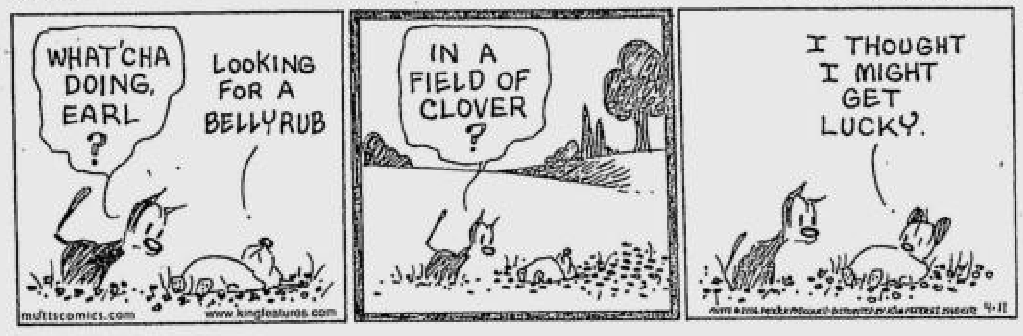
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


IBANG-IBA NA ANG PAGDARAOS NG SEMANA SANTA NGAYON.
NOONG ARAW E BAWAL ANG MAGSAYA PAG HOLY WEEK.
BAWAL ANG MASAYANG MUSIC.
BAWAL ANG MASAYANG PALABAS SA TV.
BAWAL ANG MASAYANG UMPUKAN...
AT PAG BIERNES SANTO E BAWAL ANG KUMAIN NG KARNE.
KAYA NGA PURO ISDA ITONG BINILI KO SA PALENGKE E.
TUNA BELLY, TUNA PANGA, TUNA SASHIMI ...
MAG-IINUMAN BA TAYO?
OO. PERO 'YUNG HINDI MASAYANG INUMAN HA?
BAWAL 'YON.

MUTTS

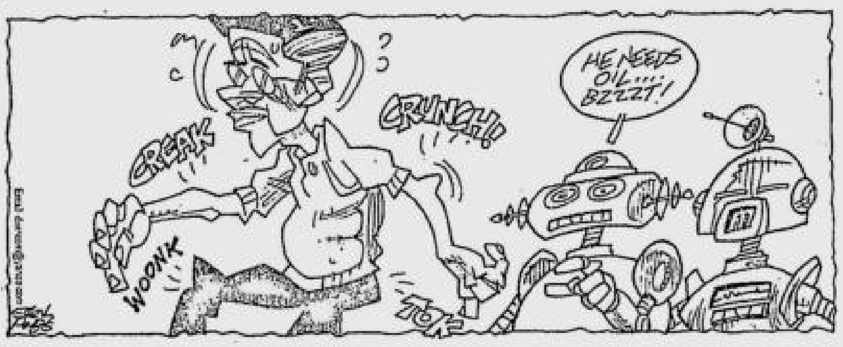
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'CHA DOING, EARL?
LOOKING FOR A BELLYRUB
IN A FIELD OF CLOVER?
I THOUGHT I MIGHT GET LUCKY.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
4-11

DIVINE COMEDY

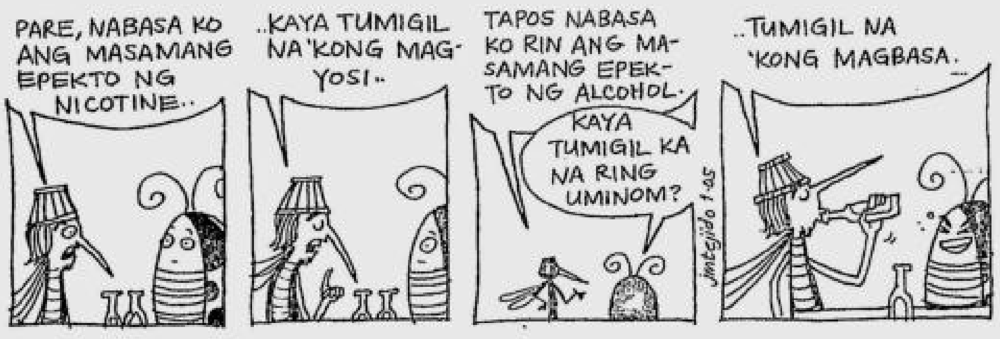
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ALAM MONG TUMATANDA KA NA KUNG
....
MERON NANG TUNOG ANG MGA JOINTS MO


CREAK
CRUNCH!!
HE NEEDS OIL.... BZZZT!
WOONK
TOK

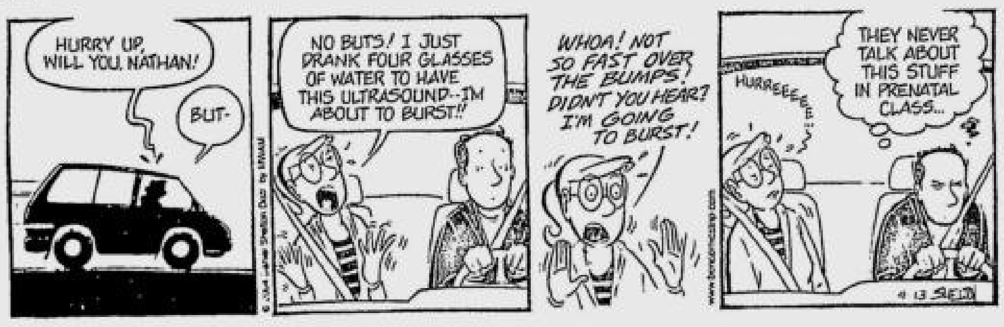
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PARE, NABASA KO ANG MASAMANG EPEKTO NG NICOTINE..
..KAYA TUMIGIL NA'KONG MAG-YOSI..
TAPOS NABASA KO RIN ANG MASAMANG EPEKTO NG ALCOHOL.
KAYA TUMIGIL KA NA RING UMINOM?
..TUMIGIL NA 'KONG MAGBASA.
jmtejido 1-05

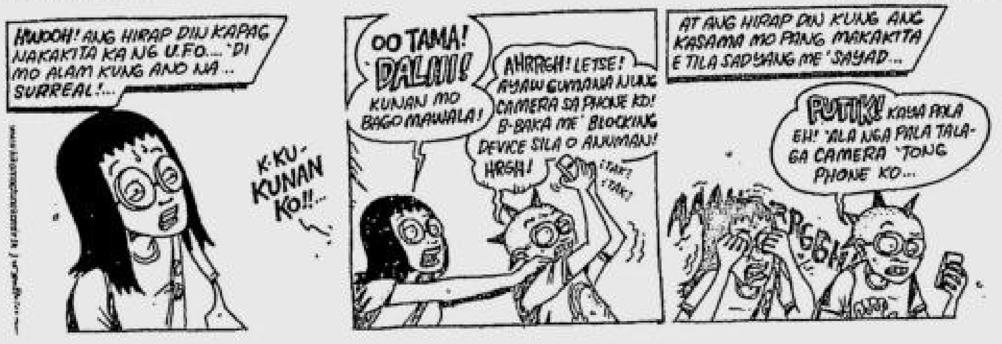
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HURRY UP, WILL YOU, NATHAN!
BUT-
NO BUTS! I JUST DRANK FOUR GLASSES OF WATER TO HAVE THIS ULTRASOUND--I'M ABOUT TO BURST!!
WHOA! NOT SO FAST OVER THE BUMPS! DIDN'T YOU HEAR? I'M GOING TO BURST!
HURREEEEE...
THEY NEVER TALK ABOUT THIS STUFF IN PRENATAL CLASS...

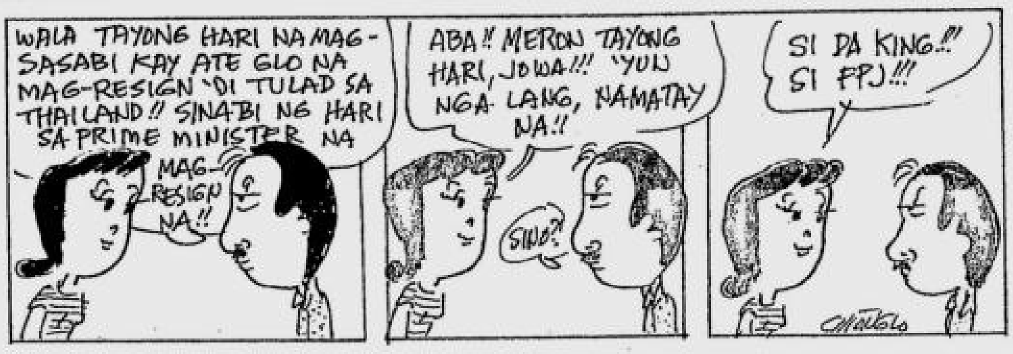
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HUOOH! ANG HIRAP DIN KAPAG NAKAKITA KA NG U.F.O.... 'DI MO ALAM KUNG ANO NA.. SURREAL!...
K-KU-KUNAN KO!!...
OO TAMA! DALII! KUNAN MO BAGO MAWALA!
AHRRGH! LETSE! AYAW GUMANA NUNG CAMERA SA PHONE KO! B-BAKA ME' BLOCKING DEVICE SILA O ANUMAN! HRGH!
TAK! TAK!
AT ANG HIRAP DIN KUNG ANG KASAMA MO PANG MAKAKITA E TILA SADYANG ME' SAYAD...
PUTIK! KAYA PALA EH! 'ALA NGA PALA TALAGA CAMERA 'TONG PHONE KO...
AAARRGGH!

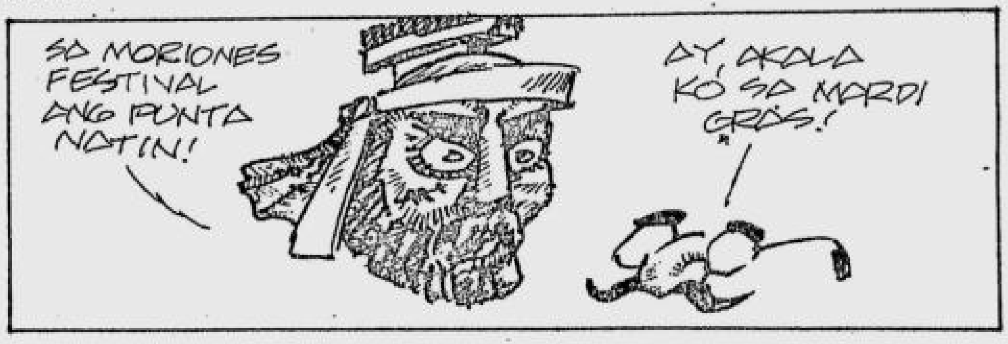
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


WALA TAYONG HARI NA MAG-SASABI KAY ATE GLO NA MAG-RESIGN 'DI TULAD SA THAILAND!! SINABI NG HARI SA PRIME MINISTER NA
MAG-RESIGN NA!!
ABA!! MERON TAYONG HARI, JOWA!!! 'YUN NGA LANG, NAMATAY NA!!
SINO?
SI DA KING!!! SI FPJ!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SA MORIONES FESTIVAL ANG PUNTA NATIN!
AY, AKALA KO SA MARDI GRAS!

Origins of theater world's superstitious beliefs unearthed

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHY DO STAGE PEOPLE WHISPER "Break a leg" to each other before a performance? Why are peanuts a no-no backstage? Why are actors instructed not to whistle before and during a performance?

More generally, why are there so many superstitious beliefs attached to the theater? Director **John Caird** has studied the matter thoroughly, poring through old sourcebooks to unearth the "practical" origins of those "beliefs."

So, stage buffs, now you know:

"Break a leg." The legend says actors should wish each other good luck this way, since to actually say "Good luck" might tempt malicious spirits to deliver the opposite.

Historically, however, one explanation is that the theater tradition of wishing colleagues to "break a leg" derived from actors who would bend at the knee, or break the line of the leg, to take a bow, or to pick up tossed coins of appreciation.

Another has to do with curtains being referred to as "legs," so a broken leg meant that the curtain would have worn out from overuse over multiple curtain calls.

No whistling backstage. Legend says don't do it, misfortune will follow. Where it comes from: sailors often ran the fly loft in theaters and they used whistles as cue signals. Someone's absentminded tune could bring a backdrop or curtain in at the wrong time—or, worse, down on someone's head.

No peanuts. Because chewed peanut bits could lodge in an actor's throat, make him cough, and ruin the delivery of his lines.

Other superstitious beliefs

NEVER wear blue onstage. This comes from Renaissance times, when indigo was a pricey dye, and any troupe that would lavish money on such a frivolous aspect of the production was not likely to be profitable.

No peacock feathers. Legend says those quills can kill. Where it comes from: The patterns on the feather too closely resembles the evil eye, a portent of terrible consequences, including death.

Caird debunks the belief that Shakespeare's "Macbeth" is an "unlucky" play, and that people staging it will be "cursed."

Finally, he reveals why some actors don't want to utter. the final line of a play in rehearsals: "Old theater troupes didn't want their play to feel entirely finished until opening night. Only then could the last line be finally spoken."

Some of these superstitious beliefs hold sway in local theater. But they can't hold a candle to the even more florid superstitious notions that rule the local movie scene.

Through the years, we've met producers who don't start shooting their movies on an "inauspicious" date, or when there's a full moon.

Others make it a point not to use the word "*itim*" in their movie's titles, believing it to be "*malas*."

And, some stars are regarded as unlucky after their movies flop, so producers stop casting them in their new films.

It's all very subjective, of course, but some producers take it seriously, so the hapless stars who are deemed to be "bad luck" have to bear with the superstitious belief's sad and unjust consequences.

Anak TV screenings

THE ANNUAL Anak TV seal derby recently kicked off to a lively start during a Negros Navigation voyage to Iloilo and Bacolod, where scores of Panay-bound passengers on the MV St. Peter the Apostle listened to discussion on the effects of excessive televiewing on children.

Concerned parents then assessed various TV programs, evaluating them on the basis of child-sensitivity. After the sessions, they took home goodies and prizes courtesy of child-friendly corporate advocates like Splash Corp., Columbia's, Panasonic, PLDT, Hallmark, Uni-President, Goldilocks and Cebu Pacific.

The Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television, the organizer of Anak TV, has scheduled more fora on responsible televiewing in various parts of the country, like Basco, Batanes and Naga City.

Most of the fora will be held under the auspices of the bishop or a major school in the area. Contact the foundation at 374-7066, or at anaktvweb.com.

10 sexiest men

LAST night, Channel [V] telecast "The 10 sexiest men in music." It will be replayed on April 18 at 6 a.m. and 1 p.m., April 19 at 7 a.m., April 20 at 7 p.m., and April 21 at 11 p.m.

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MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	THE HILLS HAVE EYES 1:05, 3:35, 6:05 R-18	TRISTAN & ISOLDE 8:25, 11:05 R-13
2	ICE AGE 2 12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:30 GP	
3	BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:30, 3:10, 5:50 R-18	EIGHT BELOW 8:30, 11:00 GP
4	BANDIDAS 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30 R-13	

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 ICE AGE 2
MTRCB. GP
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
2 BANDIDAS
MTRCB R-13
2.15, 4 35, 6 55, 9 15 LMF
3 NANNY MCPHEE
MTRCB GP 2 00, 6 40
JUST FRIENDS
MTRCB. R-13 4.20, 9.00
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
MTRCB R-18
12 00, 2 30, 5.00, 7.30, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
MTRCB PG-13 2:00, 4 40, 7 20, 10 00 LMF
Movies and schedules are subject to change thout prior notice
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GRANDMA'S BOY R13 1:30,3:30,5:30 THE HILLS HAVE EYES R18 8:20,10:30	TRISTAN AND ISOLDE R13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15	EIGHT BELOW GP 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15
JUST FRIENDS R13 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10	BANDIDAS R13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:20	ICE AGE 2 G 11:30,1:30,3:30, 5:30,7:30,9:30

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NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 11:40 , 2:15 , 4:50 , 7:25 , 10:00 R13
CINEMA 2 GRANDA'S BOY 12:55 , 3:15 , 5:35, 7:55 , 10:20 R13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 BANDIDAS 12:55 , 3:15 ,5:35, 7:55 , 10:20 R13
CINEMA 4 EIGHT BELOW/ TRISTAN & ISOLDE 11:00 , 1:45 , 4:30 / 7:15 , 10:00 GP/R13
CINEMA 5 ICE AGE 2 11:00 , 1:15 , 3:30, 5:45 , 8:00 , 10:20 GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

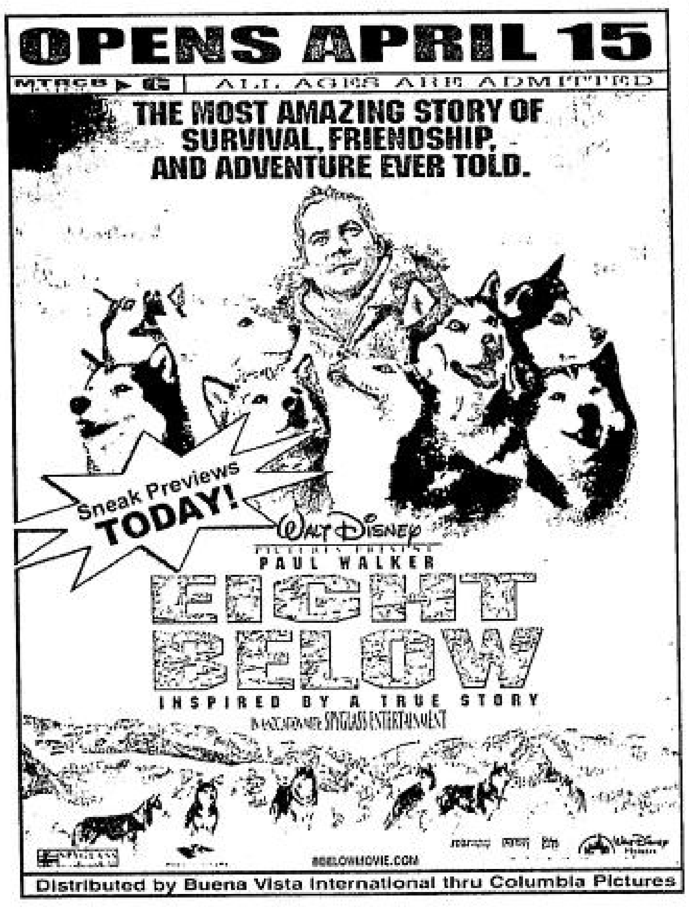
MUSIC MUSEUM

APRIL 28 ,2006	FREESTYLE & POPS FERNANDEZ	8:00PM
APRIL 27 & 28 ,2006	WILLIE NEPOMUCENO	8:00PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY APRIL 6,7,8,27,28, 29 , 2006	TEATRINO DANCE NIGHT WERE STILL HOT "THE MUSICAL" FOR INQUIRIES CALL 722-4532 LOC. 116	7:00PM 9:00PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635


OPENS APRIL 15
MTRCB G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL, FRIENDSHIP, AND ADVENTURE EVER TOLD.
Sneak Previews TODAY!
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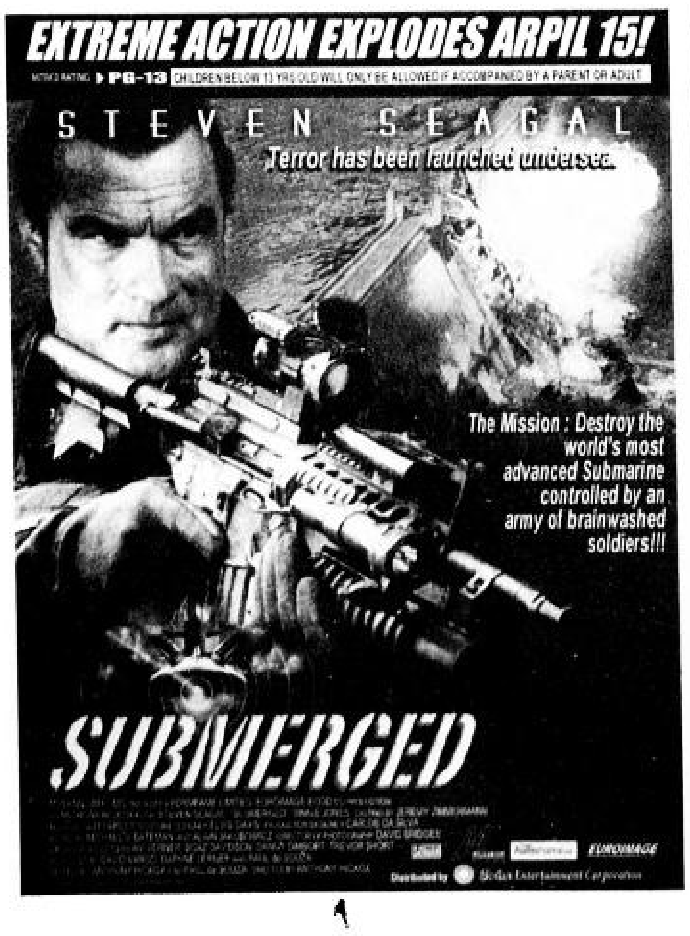
PAUL WALKER
EIGHT BELOW
INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY
8BELOWMOVIE.COM
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures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PG-13 CHILDREN BELOW 13 YRS OLD WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR ADULT
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Terror has been launched undersea.
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SUBMERGED
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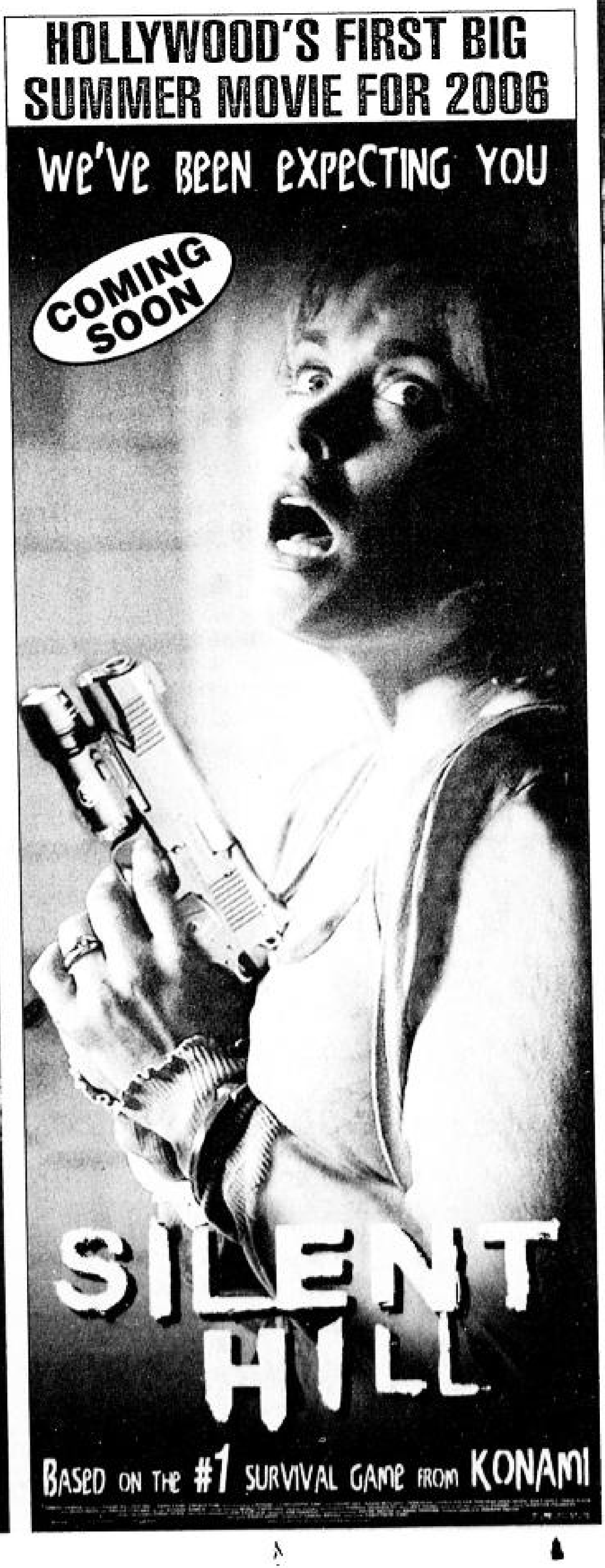
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SILENT HILL
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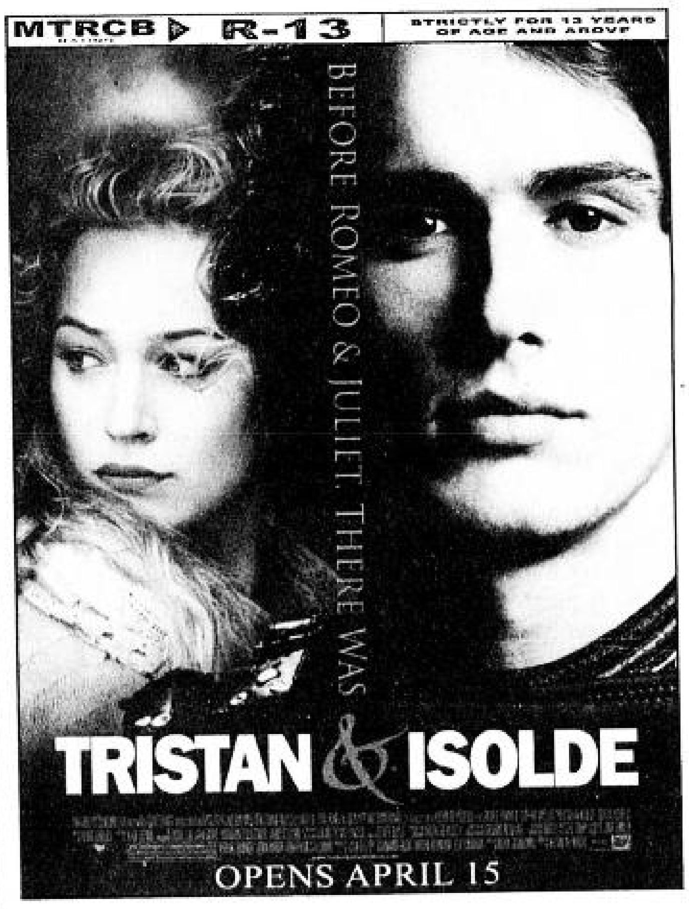
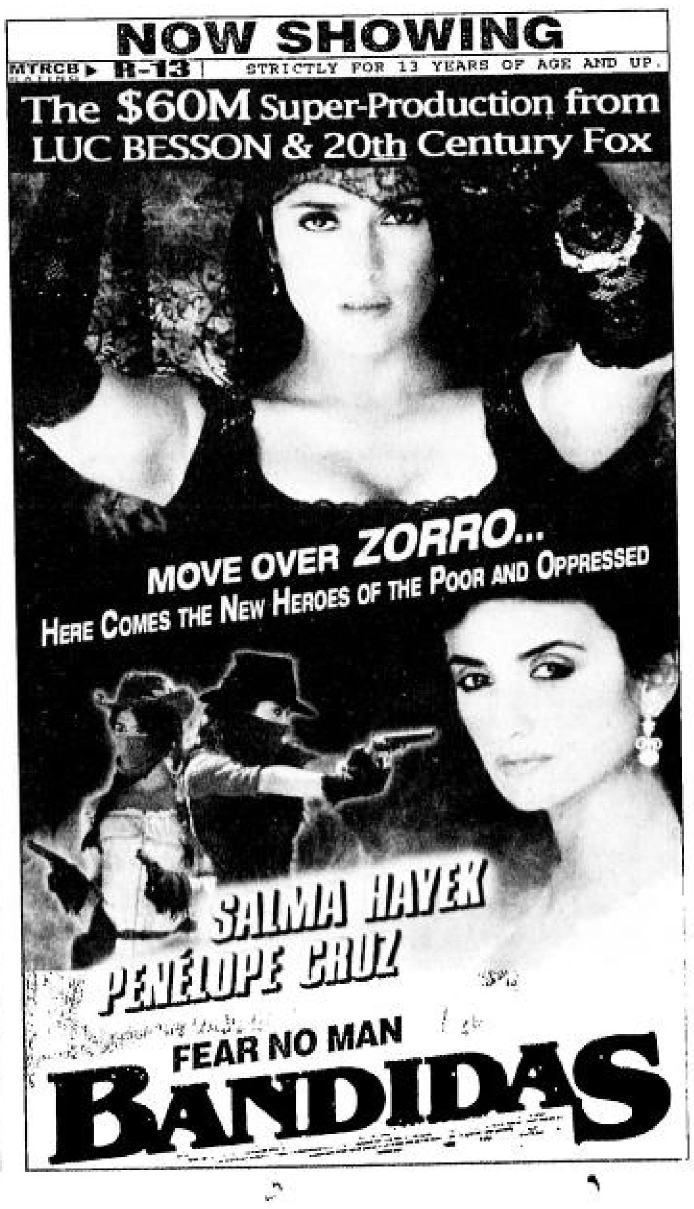

MTRCB R-13
STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
BEFORE ROMEO & JULIET THERE WAS
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
OPENS APRIL 15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BANDIDAS

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NORTH EDSA * SAN LAZARO * STA. ROSA * PAMPANGA * BAGUIO * VALENZUELA
MARILAO * MOLINO** BATANGAS * LUCENA * CEBU * DAVAO* CAGAYAN DE ORO
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MEDIA PARTNERS: 96.3WRocK IFM 93.9
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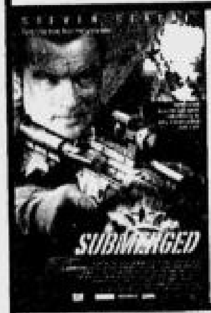

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SNEAK PREVIEW on April 10, 11 and 12 at regular ticket prices
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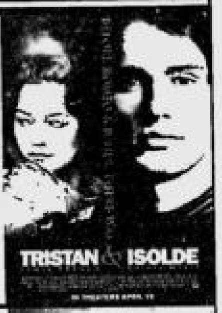
Pampanga, San Lazaro, Southmall, Sta. Mesa, Sucat and Valenzuela
REGULAR SHOWING STARTS ON APRIL 15!
MTRCB Rating: R-13
(Only aged 13 and above will be admitted)
Distributed by 20th Century Fox



EIGHT BELOW
SNEAK PREVIEW on April 10, 11 and 12 at regular ticket prices
at the following branches:
Bacoor, Baguio, Batangas, Bicutan, Cagayan De Oro, Cebu, Dasmariñas, Davao
Fairview, Iloilo, Manila, Marilao, Megamall, Molino, North EDSA, Pampanga
San Lazaro, Southmall, Sta. Mesa, Sta. Rosa, Sucat and Valenzuela
MTRCB Rating: G OPENS APRIL 15 AT SM CINEMAS Distributed by:

THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL, FRIENDSHIP, AND ADVENTURE EVER TOLD.
EIGHT BELOW

METRO MANILA

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
CINEMA 2
ICE AGE 2

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 VENOM
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
7 BANDIDAS
8 EIGHT BELOW
9 ICE AGE 2
10 SHE'S THE MAN
11 ULTRAVIOLET
12 NANNY McPHEE

SM CITY MANILA
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 BANDIDAS
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 ICE AGE 2
5 SHE'S THE MAN
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 V FOR VENDETTA
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 VENOM
11 ULTRAVIOLET
12 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM MEGACINEMA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 VENOM
4 RESERVED
5 SHE'S THE MAN
6 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
7 JUST FRIENDS
8 BANDIDAS
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 ICE AGE 2
11 ULTRAVIOLET
12 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 BANDIDAS
5 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
6 VENOM
7 NANNY McPHEE
8 JUST FRIENDS
9 SHE'S THE MAN
10 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 ICE AGE 2
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 BANDIDAS
6 VENOM
7 CHINESE TALL STORY
8 SHE'S THE MAN
9 JUST FRIENDS

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 ULTRAVIOLET
6 VENOM
7 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
8 BANDIDAS

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 ICE AGE 2
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 BANDIDAS
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY SUCAT
1 ICE AGE 2
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 BANDIDAS

LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 SYRIANA
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY BACOOR
1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 VENOM
3 ICE AGE 2
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
5 EIGHT BELOW
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 BANDIDAS
8 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MARILAO
1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 VENOM

SM CITY LUCENA
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 ICE AGE 2
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 SHAGGY DOG
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY MOLINO
1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 VENOM

VISAYAS
MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 GLORY ROAD
6 V FOR VENDETTA
7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM CITY ILOILO
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 RESERVED
3 ICE AGE 2
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 VENOM
7 RESERVED
8 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY DAVAO
1 CASANOVA
2 NANNY McPHEE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 THE DARK
5 SYRIANA
6 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 RESERVED
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 ICE AGE 2

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE
MOVIEWORLD
CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES
www.robinsonsmovieworld.com
MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA 632-9116
1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN • THX 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
2 ICE AGE 2 11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
3 BANDIDAS 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
6 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
7 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
8 JUST FRIENDS 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00
9 SHE'S THE MAN 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00
10 BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
3 JUST FRIENDS 12:00 1:40 3:20
BASIC INSTINCT 2 5:30 7:40 9:50
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 BANDIDAS 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
7 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

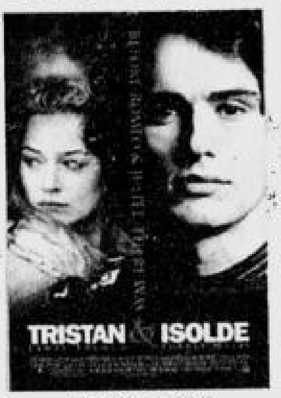
METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199
1 JUST FRIENDS 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 ICE AGE 2 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:15
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05
4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
5 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
6 BASIC INSTINCT 2 1:05 3:40 6:20 9:05
7 BANDIDAS 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
8 MOMENTS OF LOVE 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30
1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
5 ICE AGE 2
6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575
1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378
1 BANDIDAS
2 ICE AGE 2
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
4 GRANDMA'S BOY

CHECK THIS OUT ▸▸



before Romeo and Juliet there was...
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
from executive producer Ridley Scott comes a sweeping tale of love and loss, myth and fate, based on the timeless Celtic myth of star-crossed passion.
catch the
SNEAK PREVIEWS
at Robinsons Movieworld
Galleria, Ermita, Metro East,
Pioneer, Novaliches, Imus and Dasmariñas
APRIL 10 to 12
MTRCB Rating PG-13
OPENS on APRIL 15

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907
1 ICE AGE 2
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870
1 ICE AGE 2
2 VENOM
3 HOUSE OF FURY
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 V FOR VENDETTA

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332
1 ICE AGE 2
2 NANNY MCPHEE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
5 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview

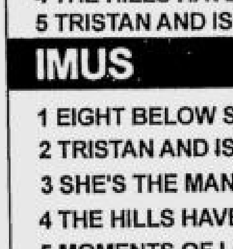
ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
4 ICE AGE 2

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188
1 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270
1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 NANNY MCPHEE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
6 ULTRAVIOLET

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459
1 VENOM
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 ICE AGE 2
4 SAHGGY DOG
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview

ILOILO (033) 336-8070
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 NORTH COUNTRY
4 VENOM
5 ICE AGE 2
6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview



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ELMO

Trouble on . . .

From page A2-1

veloped the shows with help of experts from Zero to Three, a well-regarded nonprofit advocacy group.

Despite that prestigious partnership, the project has drawn fire from other experts who note that the American Academy of Pediatrics advises against TV viewing for children under 2. They fear the Sesame brand and Zero to Three's endorsement will convince many parents their infants would benefit from watching videos.

"There is no evidence that screen media is beneficial for babies, and growing evidence it may be harmful," said the Boston-based Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood.

Huge market

There already is a huge US market for videos aimed at infants: "Teletubbies" has been on the air for nearly a decade, sometimes drawing similar criticism, and The Walt Disney Co.'s Baby Einstein products are very lucrative.

Sesame Workshop had stayed out of this field, but says it now has found an effective way to promote interaction between parents and children under 2—something its executives say other shows do not do well.

"We didn't go into this in an impulsive way," said Rosemarie Truglio, Sesame Workshop's vice president of education and research. "We wanted to invite the parent into the viewing situation."

Baby Elmo

The videos show characters such as Baby Elmo and Baby Big Bird with their parents or caregivers, going through daily routines like feeding and bedtime.

Truglio contends there is no scientific research justifying the "extreme recommendation" from the pediatrics academy to keep the youngest children away from TV.

"We're not advocating just plopping kids in front of a TV screen," she said.

Dr. Kyle Pruett, a child development expert at Yale University and member of Zero to Three's board, initially was skeptical of the new videos but said his views have changed.

"These are the absolute antithesis of park-your-baby-in-front-of-the-TV kind of videos," he said. "They are thoughtful, informative—it's not a corporate campaign trying to draw kids into TV life." AP

Gretchen B on the text . . .

From page A2-6

78—too old to govern. He's not in touch with what the people, especially the young crowd, want. What will happen to a tourist spot like Baguio if there were no more entertainment at night?"

Heck, how would we all cope without a bit of entertainment in our lives? Why doesn't Mayor **Yaranon** go after the vendors of pirated DVDS lining Session Road instead? After Holy Week, all bar owners in Baguio plan to hold a protest rally. The cool Baguio breeze can no longer stop them from heating up! Sad to say, not everything is fine in the City of Pines.

How's Direk Lino?

I texted my "sis" Sen. **Pia Cayetano** to ask how her brother, Direk **Lino**, is handling the issue about his girlfriend **Bianca Gonzales** and **Zanjoe Marudo**. The two ex-housemates got too close for comfort inside Big Brother's house. **Pia** replied "I will relay your message to him. There will be a time for that."

Heard that Star Cinema is cooking up a movie for **Bianca** and **Zanjoe**. Out of *delicadeza*, I'm sure they won't ask **Lino** to direct it. If ever, the sidelights during the shooting would even be more interesting than the movie itself. That would be a movie within a movie!

Speaking of **Zanjoe**, is it true that he doesn't want to go back to modeling anymore? After his stint in "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition," he intends to focus on show biz instead. A colleague got turned off though when Zanjoe said that modeling is only for those who are trying to make a name because they are paid less. It seems that all the fame has gotten to his head so quickly. Has his two-month stay in Big Bro's house caused amnesia, that he has forgotten where he started? Is the former Bench model no role model after all?

Speaking of peace

My friends in Brahma Kumaris are conducting Holy Week retreats on "Peace of Mind." This group has become famous for holding such good programs—seminars, workshops, public lectures—where many celebrities have participated in. Among these celebs are **Judy Ann Santos, Dexter Doria, Juan Rodrigo, Dulce Aristorenas, Rosanna Roces, Chiqui Pineda, Vicki Belo** and **Timmy Cruz**. They have also maintained good connections with the modern yogis.

Interested parties can choose between live-in or live-out retreats that will be held in centers all over the country. in Metro Manila, Baguio, Davao, Naga and Tagaytay City. For details call 890-7960 or 922-9231.

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL, FRIENDSHIP, AND ADVENTURE EVER TOLD.
Walt Disney
PAUL WALKER
EIGHT BELOW
INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

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OPENS on APRIL 15
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MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 (DOLBY) ICE AGE 2 GP
2 (DOLBY) BANDIDAS
3 (DOLBY) NANNY MC PHEE GP
JUST FRIENDS R13
4 (DOLBY) THE HILLS HAVE EYES R18
(DOLBY) PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 JUST FRIENDS
2 VENOM
3 ICE AGE-2
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
6 BASIC INSTINCT-2
7 GOLD (DOLBY) BANDIDAS
8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
9 V FOR VENDETTA
10 CHINESE TALL STORY

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) THE HILLS HAVE EYES
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 (DOLBY) ICE AGE 2
3 (DOLBY) BASIC INSTINCT 2
EIGHT BELOW
4 (DOLBY) BANDIDAS

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium
Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) ICE AGE-2
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 (DOLBY) ULTRAVIOLET
3 ICE AGE-2
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 BIG MOMMAS HOUSE
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA
Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 SHAGGY DOG
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) VENOM
4 NORTH COUNTRY
Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 ICE AGE-2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) VENOM
Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan)
1 ICE AGE-2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE / V FOR VENDETTA

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 ICE AGE-2
2 BASIC INSTINCT-2
3 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
TRISTAN & ISOLDE (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 (DOLBY) MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) ICE AGE-2
4 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 BANDIDAS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 BASIC INSTINCT 2

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
5 BASIC INSTINCT-2

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 VENOM
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 AEON FLUX
4 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8604285, 6433994
1 BASIC INSTINCT-2
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
3 CHINESE TALL STORY

Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 16 BLOCKS
2 VENOM
Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 HIYAS SA PARAISO NG KASALANAN
3 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT
4 DEVILS IN THE DEEP
Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 NAG AAPOY NA DAGAT
3 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 ULTRAVIOLET

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 ICE AGE-2
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE-2

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 ICE AGE-2
2 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 ICE AGE-2
3 VENOM
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
MOMENTS OF LOVE
V FOR VENDETTA
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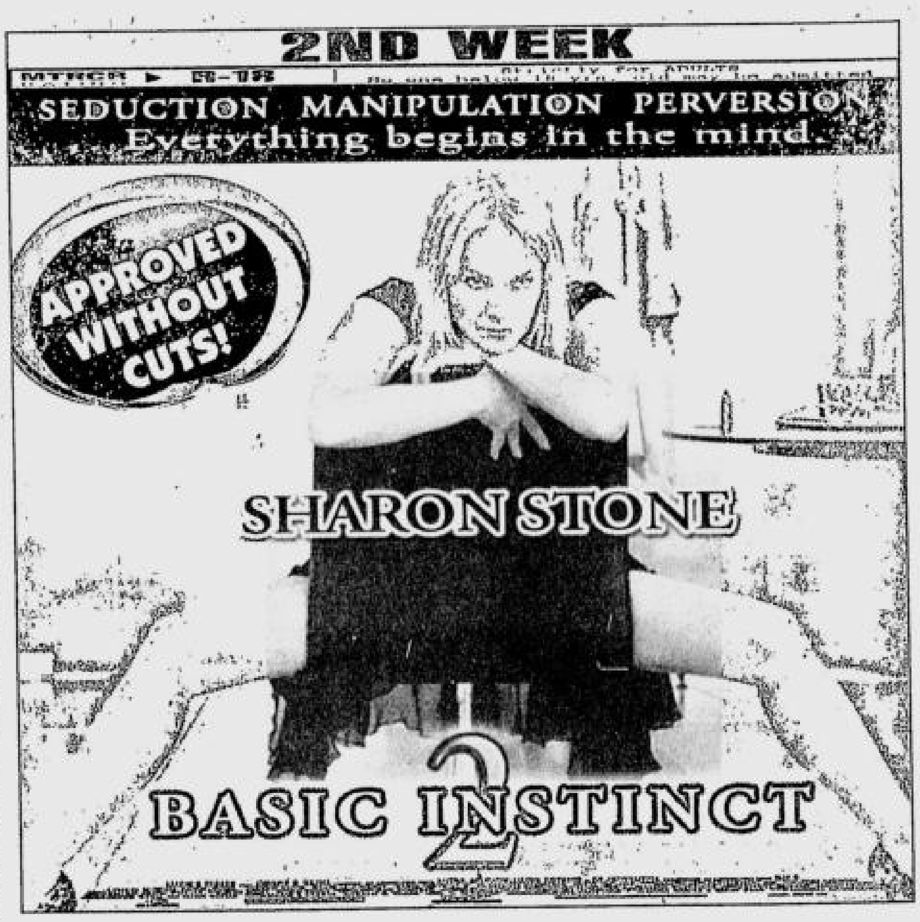
Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 16 BLOCKS

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BASIC INSTICNT-2
2 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE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TRISTAN & ISOLDE 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50
NANNY McPHEE 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40
BANDIDAS 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
ICE AGE 2 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20
TRISTAN & ISOLDE 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00
MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50
SHE'S THE MAN 2:00 / 4:20
JUST FRIENDS 6:50 / 9:00
THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:00 / 2:20 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
Ali MALL CINEMAS
MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:00 R3 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
ICE AGE 2 12:15 R4 / 1:25 / 3:35 / 5:45 / 7:55
BANDIDAS 12:15 R3 / 1:45 / 4:05 / 6:25 / 8:45
BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:55 / 3:15 / 5:35 / 8:05
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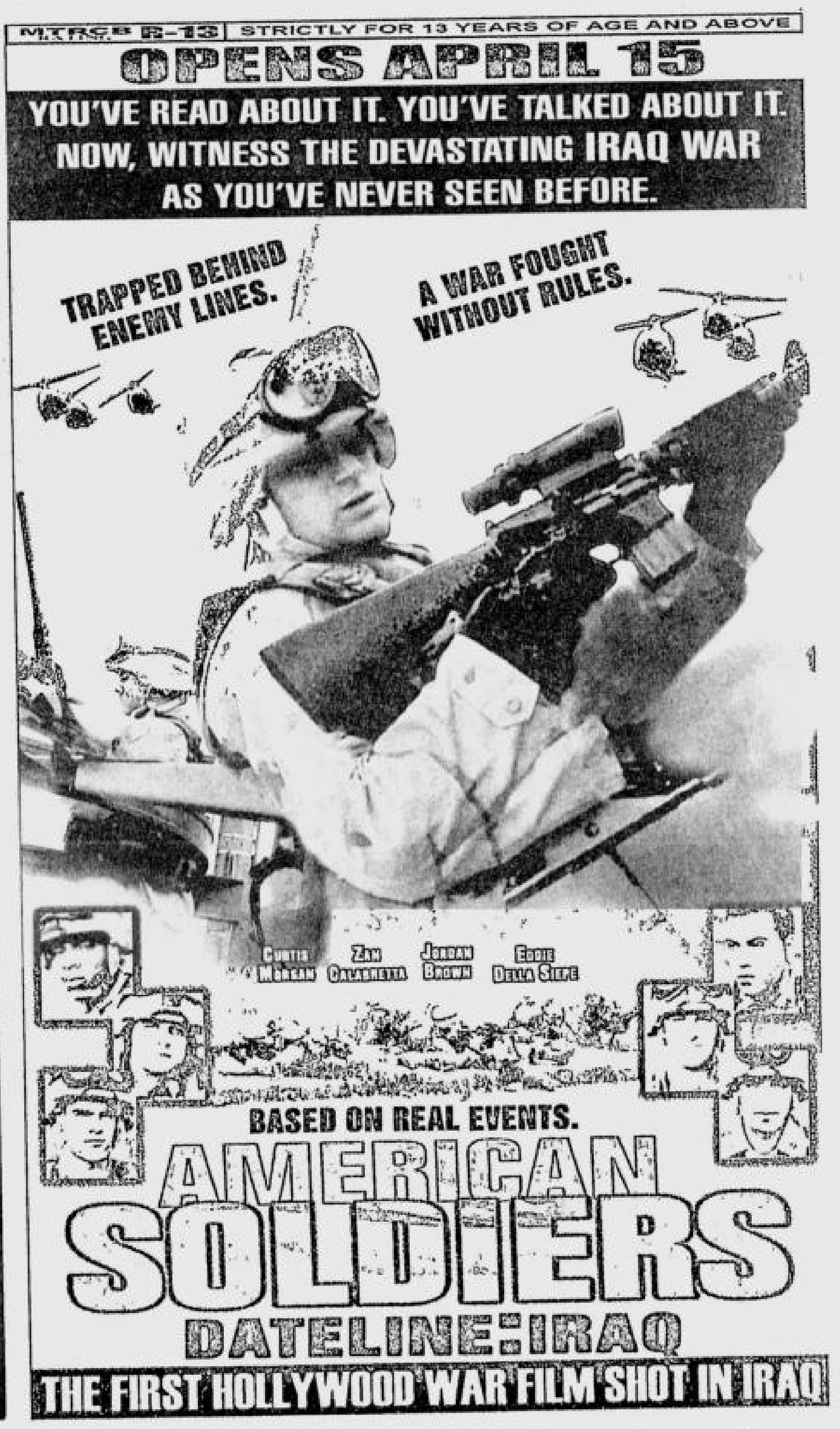
Apr 16, Sun. 4:10 RED BULL vs ALASKA
6:30 TALK N TEXT vs AIR 21
SANTANA ROOTS... GREG ROLIE LIVE!
APRIL 28, Friday 8 pm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BASED ON REAL EVENTS.
AMERICAN SOLDIERS
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ENTERTAINMENT

Gretchen B on the text spat: Bong hasn't stopped calling

GRETCHEN Barretto

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

SO MUCH HAS BEEN said and been written about **Gretchen Barretto**'s backing out of the movie she was supposed to do with **Bong Revilla**. It would have been La Greta's comeback vehicle. Moviegoers are dying to see the face that launched a thousand shrieks after a long, long while.

But just when it was all systems go, **Gretch** got wind of a text message that **Bong**'s wife **Lani Mercado** sent to her close friends. The message read: *"Kung ikaw si Lani,ipagkakatiwala mo ba ang asawa mong si Sen.* ***Bong Revilla*** *makapareha si* ***Gretchen*** *sa pelikula?"* Naturally this didn't sit too well with **Gretch** so she decided to call the whole thing off. It wasn't worth the aggravation, **Gretch** decided, considering what a charmed life she already enjoys.

Many controversies ago, **Gretch** and **Bong** were romantically linked. But now they are both happy with their own partners so the past shouldn't be a big deal anymore. Although **Lani**'s text makes it seem that she's still affected by the issue that has long been buried in show biz archives. Oh well... what's a wife to do if her husband is perpetually linked, right or wrong, to so many women?

I texted both **Gretch** and **Lani** for the real score. **Lani**'s reply: "It would be best to get **Bong**'s statement. I sent **Gretchen** flowers with a card saying thank you for your kind words in **Ricky**'s column. The text message I sent to six friends was just to solicit advice. If I have offended you, I'm sorry. Thanks for valuing our friendship. *Sana 'wag na ito humaba,* **Dolly** and may [it have a] peaceful ending."

The title of the movie is "Kapag Tumibok ang Puso (Not Once but Twice)." **Lani** has survived countless intrigues about **Bong**'s "Don Juan" ways so by now she should be immune to its controversies already, huh?

And here's **Gretch**'s text-back: "I plan to produce my own movie *na lang*. Nope, I didn't receive any flowers from **Lani**, [not] yet. **Bong** hasn't stopped calling and texting to apologize. I've [turned off] my cell [phone]. I need rest. Thanks, dear. Luv ya."

Knowing **Gretch**, she's got too much class to let inanities get the better of her.

Since it's Holy Week, may peace prevail between the two camps and may other show biz erring factions also call a cease-fire. Don't seize the day for *chika*. It's Holy Tuesday. Time to cease the day for intrigues.

> 'I have turned off my phone,' she says. 'I need to rest'

LANI Mercado and Bong Revilla

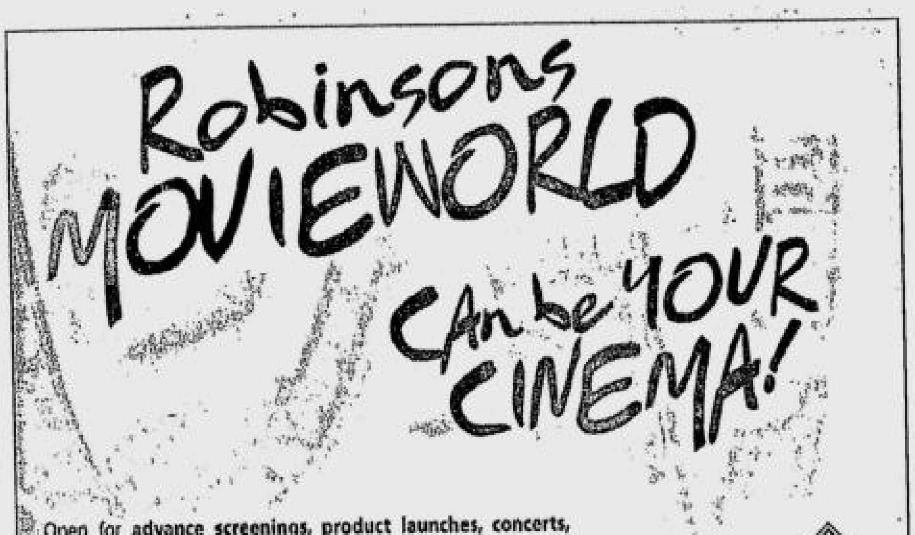
Heaven on earth

My kids, sis and I had a glorious pre-Holy Week vacation in Baguio. Endless thanks to the lovable resident manager of Camp John Hay Manor Hotel, **Jocelyn Ompoc**, and to the gracious staff—**Julie Ann Rimando, Marco Fetizanan, Crystal Camacho** and **Carol Lacson**—for the red carpet treatment.

Manor is a piece of heaven on earth! It has retained the old charm of Baguio blended with modern amenities. I spotted **Anthony Pangilinan** and **Maricel Laxa** enjoying cozy Manor, too. While bar-hopping in the city, I learned that not only beer is brewing in the nightspots. There's trouble brewing, too, because Mayor **Braulio Yaranon** wants all bars to close at midnight. And next year, he won't be renewing their permits to operate. Some bars were raided Thursday night.

What would the summer capital be like without nightlife? The mayor wants to convert Baguio into a Holy City. Nothing wrong with that, but he should not kill business establishments in the process. My bar-owner friends **Dominic Mendoza** (Extravaganza) and **Irwin de Dios** (Latino & Fridays) lament: "We relocated from Manila to do business here. It's sad that the mayor refuses to compromise. He's

GRETCHEN/ A2-5



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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	3 CHINESE TALL STORY	4 MOMENTS OF LOVE			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	2 GRANDMA'S BOY	3 THX BANDIDAS 12:05, 2:10, 4:15, 7:20, 8:25, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BASIC INSTINCT 2	5 MOMENTS OF LOVE	6 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	7 JUST FRIENDS
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX BANDIDAS 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 RENT 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 JUST FRIENDS 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	2 BANDIDAS	3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	4 GRANDMA'S BOY	5 JUST FRIENDS		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	2 NANNY MCPHEE	3 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	4 ULTRAVIOLET			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	2 MOMENTS OF LOVE	3 CHINESE TALL STORY	4 BANDIDAS	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES		

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GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
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AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Ayala Center Cebu's Easter Event & Kiddo's 1st Year Anniversary April 16, 2006	Cartoon Network Summer Camp April 22, 2006

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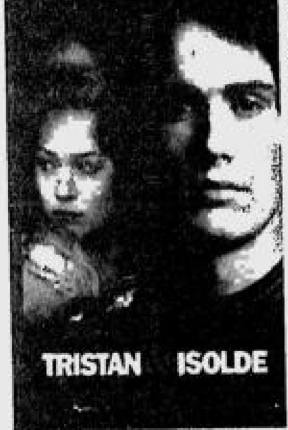
Ayala MUSEUM — Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006 For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org



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EIGHT BELOW: General Audience

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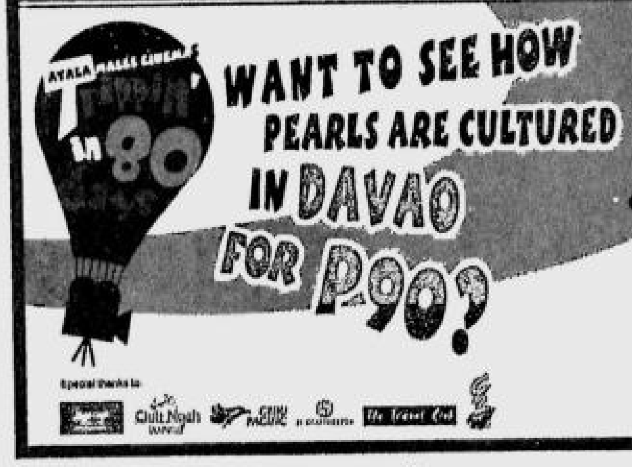

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Lacoste His & Hers Watch His Model: 6800G31 Her Model: 6800L31	MEI SHAN C. LI LIAO 10 Condor St. Concorde Vill. Mia Rd., Tambo, Parañaque City	BRYAN MARK YABAO 33 E. Rosalia St., St. Michael Village, Las Piñas City
Kenneth Cole His and Hers Watch His Model: KC 3584 Her Model: KC 4480	BARBARA B. GARCIA H-203 Galeria de Magallanes, Magallanes Vill., Makati	ZENAIDA C. ALBA 80 Angeles St., Alabang Hills Village

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Minor Prizes: Lacoste His and Hers Watch His Model: 3510G63 Her Model: 3510L63	WINNERS: HAZEL GO 44 Eagle St., Sto. Niño Vill. Banilad, Cebu City	WINNERS: ASUNCION M. GARCIA 9011 Hormiga St., Rizal Vil. Makati
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Winners have been notified via telephone call and registered mail. chronos LUCERNE TIMESTUDIO

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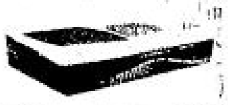
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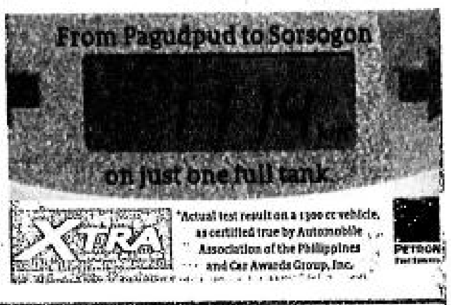


*Actual test result on a 1300 cc vehicle, as certified true by Automobile Association of the Philippines and Car Awards Group, Inc.

DOTC gets go-ahead to bid MRT 7

'Swiss challenge' to generate cheapest price for rail venture

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT WILL OPEN the Metro Rail Transit Line 7 project to bidders later this month as part of its effort to get the cheapest price for the proposed rail link from Quezon City to Bulacan.

Transportation Assistant Secretary Robert R. Castañares said that the board of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) has given the go-ahead for the so-called "Swiss challenge," which will allow other interested proponents to improve on the offer of Universal MRT Corp.

The crux of the issue is the $108-million capacity fee, which the government will advance to Universal MRT for the first 10 months of the project, should it emerge as the winning bidder after the Swiss challenge.

"We're looking for foreign bidders who will offer [to accept] lower capacity fees," Castañares said.

The government uses Swiss challenge rules as a basis for obtaining competitive bids for "unsolicited" projects like MRT 7. Under its

DOTC/B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

SMC claims no deal over Del Monte /B2

BREAKTIME

Walk in the perks /B8

'Hot money' inflow thinned in 1st quarter

By Doris C. Dumlao

NET FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INFLOWS TO THE Philippines thinned in the first quarter from a year ago due to smaller initial public offerings and a stronger peso that made profit-taking on local government securities more attractive.

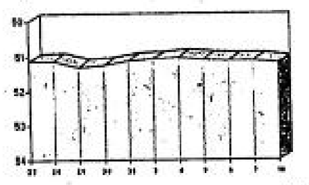
The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday that registered foreign portfolio investments—referring to foreign inflows to local equities, debt papers and bank products coursed through custodian banks—resulted in a net inflow of $489.7 million in the first three months from the $1.5 billion inflow a year ago.

The BSP-registered portfolio inflows, also tagged as "hot money" due to their volatile nature, are an early indicator of portfolio inflows from abroad but are not all-encompassing versus the inflows counted in the balance of payments. For instance, the proceeds from the government's $2.1 billion in offshore

HOT/B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

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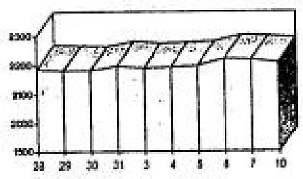
As of 5 p.m., April 10, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks fall ahead of Easter break

STOCKS FELL YESTERDAY AS INVESTORS cut their holdings ahead of the long Easter break, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index, or PSEi, declined 8.79 points, or 0.4 percent, to 2,207.94, after finishing 0.2 percent lower Friday.

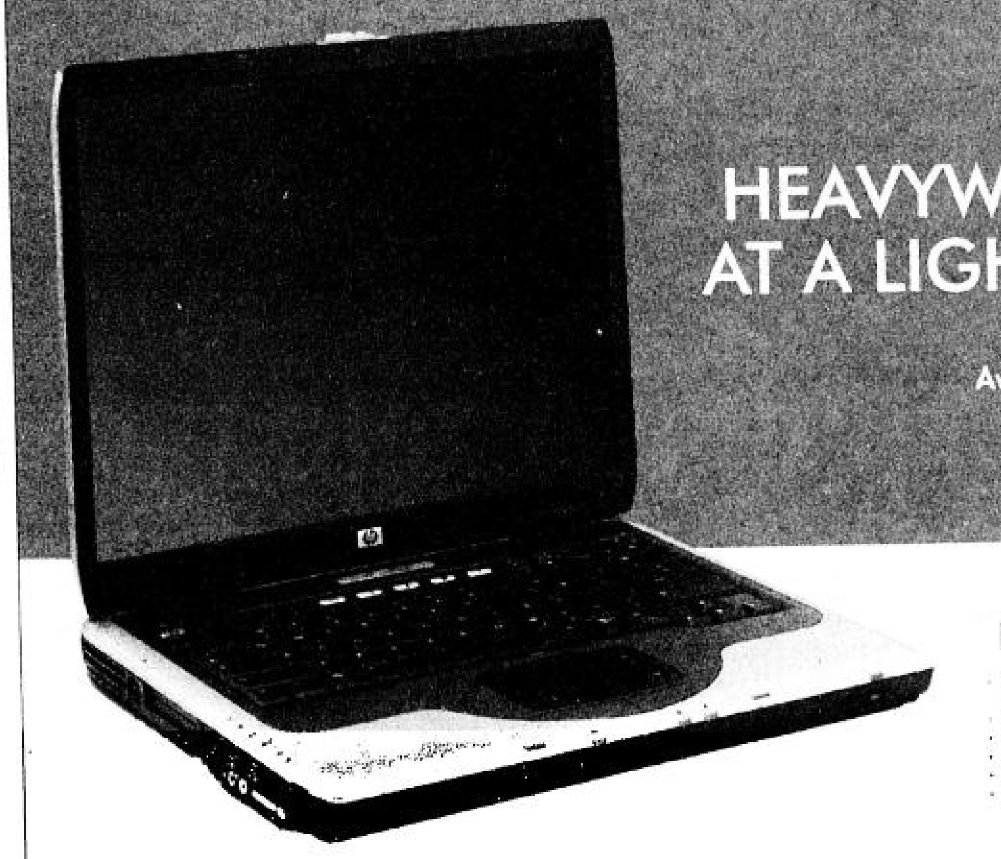
"Some investors want to stay liquid and others are simply exercising caution ahead of the holiday," said Westlink Global Equities chair Rommel Macapagal.

Local financial markets will be closed on Thursday and Friday.

Among the actively traded stocks were Ayala Land, which fell 2.2 percent to P11, and its parent Ayala Corp., which ended down 0.7

STOCKS/B2

HP Smart Office Solutions



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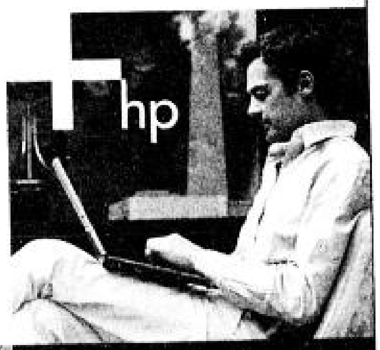

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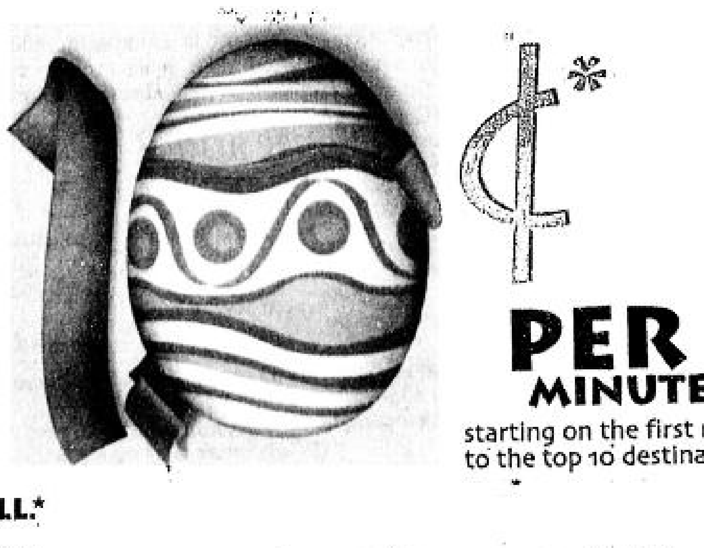

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SUN CELLULAR

SMC claims no deal over Del Monte

Macondray to be treated like any supplier, says beverage firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP. YESTERDAY said it did not cut any "sweetheart deals" with the Lorenzo family and the Lorenzo-owned Macondray & Co. Inc. since the beverage giant assumed part ownership of pineapple products distributor Del Monte Pacific Ltd.

This was in reaction to a column in the INQUIRER that came out yesterday.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, San Miguel said that Macondray "will be treated like any potential third-party supplier."

Macondray, a company owned by the family of former Agriculture Secretary Cito Lorenzo, was instrumental in the acquisition of Del Monte Pacific by San Miguel and NutriAsia of the Campos family.

The Lorenzos maintained control of Del Monte Pacific through Macondray's 21-percent stake in the company.

The Macondray stake also gave them the right to match offers for Cirio Finanziria SPA's 38.82-percent stake in Del Monte Pacific.

The Lorenzos' decision to exercise their right to buy Cirio's stake and then sell their shareholdings to NutriAsia Pacific allowed San Miguel and NutriAsia to wrestle control of Del Monte Pacific over other firms.

Because of the leverage it gave to NutriAsia Pacific, Macondray is reportedly being given distribution rights for certain Del Monte brands and vegetable products imported from the United States, as well as the insurance business for Del Monte's assets in the Philippines.

As a matter of policy, all potential suppliers and service providers will go through a transparent bidding process, NutriAsia said.

San Miguel also branded as "inaccurate" the reference to the compensation of San Miguel president Ramon S. Ang in his capacity as chair of Del Monte Pacific.

"This is inaccurate, as the compensations listed in Del Monte Pacific's 2005 annual report may not necessarily apply to the new officers," San Miguel said.

However in a disclosure by Del Monte to the Stock Exchange of Singapore last April 5, Del Monte will seek approval from shareholders for directors' fees this year worth $352,500. Of this amount, non-executive directors will each get $30,000 per annum, while the board chair will receive $22,500 a year.

Walk in the perks

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

WHY DOES THE SSS STILL refuse to join the GSIS in bidding out their holdings in Equitable PCI Bank, representing a potent control of more than 40 percent of the bank?

After all, those pension funds of the working class incurred on the EPCIB shares an original no-joke cost of some P20 billion ... and still counting.

Up to now, even with the court cases—not to mention talk about bribery—the GSIS and the SSS still do not have a coordinated strategy on how to recover the P20 billion.

In the Senate, by the way, they are already going bananas over the P750-million fertilizer scam, and yet this EPCIB scandal involves an amount 26 times that.

Again, that's 26 times that!

And so top officials of the SSS are getting away with all sorts foolishness in the EPCIB investments, using the money of millions of its hard-up members.

Surely, if you are the current tenant in Malacañang, besieged as you are from all fronts, you do not want another scandal of this magnitude to blow up in your face.

But why is the Palace, oh, ever so quiet about this SSS foul-up?

Instead, some groups in the Palace are even manipulating changes in the SSS leadership, pushing for the removal of, well, "straight" people in the SSS commission.

Unlike the GSIS, in other words, the SSS has no interest whatsoever to make the best out of OUR billions of pesos sank in EPCIB, and the Palace is tolerating it.

* * *

RANKED by resources, EPCIB is the country's third largest bank, mind you.

By that alone, the bank should attract serious investors, say, as much as the Palace is attracting all sorts of media flak on the Cha-cha nowadays.

Yet that P20-billion investment of the millions of hard-up members of both the GSIS and the SSS is still caught in the ongoing fight for control of the bank.

On one side are the GSIS and the Trans Middle East, opposing the takeover of EPCIB by another bank called Banco de Oro (BDO), ranked the ninth largest.

On the other side are of course the owner of BDO, the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy, whose daughter, Tessie Sy-Coson, wants BDO simply to swallow up EPCIB.

The GSIS and the SSS are being offered more pieces of paper (technically known as "shares")—and not hard CASH—by the much smaller BDO.

Naturally, wanting to recover its investments, GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia is against the scheme of Tessie Sy-Coson.

Garcia wants to bid out the GSIS-owned shares, together with the 10 percent "treasury shares" that were put in storage with EPCIB.

But the president of SSS, Corazon de la Paz, loves the takeover-disguised-as-a-merger proposal of the SM group. She does not want the SSS to join the bidding.

To think that, by joining the GSIS in the auction, with their combined 40 percent, plus the 10 percent "treasury shares," the SSS can have a better chance at recovering OUR billions sank in EPCIB.

Both of them are government-managed pension funds of the working class, anyway, and so, how can their objectives (i.e., for and on behalf of their members) ever be worlds apart?

* * *

PUT another way, the GSIS simply wants to get the most out of its EPCIB investments for the sake of its members, while the SSS wants to go to bed with the Sy family.

Why is that?

Well, in its statements to the public, the SSS said that it merely wanted to STUDY its options. And so it is taking its sweet time, is that it?

Good heavens, the market is already pumped up on this EPCIB thing, thanks partly to the SM group's devious scheme, while the SSS remains indecisive.

I don't buy this studying-the-options BS at all. Methinks that the SSS boss wants the SSS to keep its investments in the bank, whether EPCIB or BDO, to keep the perks.

For example, during the time of the Go family (the same group that sold out to the Sy family), one of the directors of a subsidiary of EPCIB called Equitable Card Network, was a certain Corazon de la Paz.

Whadayano: Each director of the card company was entitled to a per diem of P500,000.

Look at that—half a million pesos for a meeting! One freaking meeting! What's so frigging hard about walking to the meeting and getting that P500,000 perk? It's not as if you have to dodge bullets and spears or anything like that!

And did it benefit the SSS members? No, sir, it did not.

It went straight into the pockets of the very same director that used the SSS members' money to get to the board of the card company.

Do you know that other stockholders of EPCIB have been calling for (and rather vehemently calling for) a clean-up of the card company, since it has been making less money compared to other companies in the same business?

Did our, er, "representative" to the board do anything about it? No, Ate Glo, she did not.

Moreover, she still has to deliver on her promise to audit the P16 billion in missing EPCIB funds—the money that the Go family used to pay for the old PCIBank.

* * *

NOW, one of the SSS commissioners even dared to call me to ask for a little favor. And that is, could I please be kind to that Cora de la Paz!

To me, Cora de la Paz will become the best government official of the century if she makes the SSS join the GSIS in bidding out their shares in EPCIB.

The EPCIB story has come to the part when interest in the bank has been heightened by the controversies—starting from the P43 per share price that the SSS agreed to accept from the SM group before the 2004 presidential elections, up to this "takeover" scheme.

Believe me, those shares can now fetch a good price. How about we jump on it, boss?

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 10, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35	35	35	203,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62	61.5	62	1,885,600
China Banking Corp.	730	750	730	750	790
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	4,700,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71	71	69	70	465,900
International Exch. Bank	32	32	32	32	1,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	38.5	38	38.5	750,400
Philippine National Bank	34	34	34	34	3,200
Phil. Savings Bank	38	39	37.5	39	2,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.5	80,600
Security Bank Corp.	47	47	46	46	4,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	39	39	38	38	1,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Abacus Financial	0.41	0.51	0.41	0.51	20,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	1,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	28	28	28	28	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3240	3240	3240	3240	520
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	185	185	185	185	6,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2180	2180	2180	2180	730
Ivantage Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	2,975,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	43	44.5	43	44.5	80,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	46.5	45.5	46.5	647,400
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14	14	14	18,900
Manila Electric Co. B	21.25	21.25	21	21	45,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.4	10,317,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.35	4.35	762,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	120,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	14,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	22,000
Cen Azucar De Tarlac	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	25,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36	35	35.5	422,500
Pancake House Inc.	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05	10,000
RFM Corp.	0.72	0.76	0.72	0.75	1,840,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.7	79,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60	59.5	60	82,000
San Miguel Corp. B	79	79.5	79	79	47,600
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.75	328,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	170,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.34	0.31	0.34	12,080,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.56	1.58	2,222,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	120,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	5,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
CHEMICALS					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	150,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	1,600,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.07	7,700,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.49	560,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	40,000,000
Ayala Corp.	350	350	345	347.5	203,780
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.6	242,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	8,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	212,000
APC Group Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	2,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	160,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	40,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9	9	9	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1	1	0.99	0.99	2,120,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.55	3,127,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.85	591,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.3	100,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.8	368,000
Medco Holdings	0.23	0.235	0.23	0.235	250,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	12,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.235	0.23	0.235	1,900,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	2,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	2,060,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	20,000
SM Investments Corp.	226	227	226	227	318,860
South China Resources Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	20,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.25	11.25	11	11	8,168,900
Belle Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.14	2,182,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	150,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.84	369,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1	1	1	1	300,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1	1	0.96	0.96	160,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	500,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	80,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	35,890,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	2,600,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	1,659,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	250,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	8,470,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,370,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	8.2	8.3	8.2	8.2	83,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	400,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.7	3,868,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	3,800,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	140,900
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.98	620,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	870	870	865	870	13,050
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.05	3.05	2.95	2.95	2,760,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1975	1980	1965	1975	48,990
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	660,000
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	100,000
Ionics Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	2,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	700,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	32,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	30,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	96,900
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	130,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.36	6,011,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,050,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	409,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	210,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	320,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	2,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.78	1.78	154,000
Paxys Inc.	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	487,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	40	40	40	40	22,800
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.44	1.52	1.42	1.5	2,693,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.5	1.54	1.48	1.54	1,588,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	115,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	599,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.3	8.6	8.3	8.6	169,000
Benguet Corp. B	25	25	25	25	1,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.62	1.9	1.62	1.88	889,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.29	0.26	0.29	31,600,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	12,970,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	168,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	23,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	258,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.05	3.25	3.05	3.25	6,950,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.05	3.25	3	3.25	10,399,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27	26,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	1,340,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	550,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	280,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	67,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	130,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	90,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	2,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series L	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	12.5	13	12.5	12.75	320,500

Megaworld offer raises P5.14B

LISTED PROPERTY DEVELOPER Megaworld Corp. yesterday said in a statement that its international offering of 3.27 billion common shares was more than 1.5 times oversubscribed.

The offer price has been set at P1.38 per share.

Proceeds of the international offering reached P5.14 billion, according to Megaworld.

The domestic offer, which starts on April 10, is expected to raise and additional P271 million. The combined offering represents 35 percent of Megaworld's existing share capital and 1.4 times the current free float.

Megaworld went on an international road show from March 27 to April 6 this year to expand its stockholders' base among foreign institutional investors and raise fresh funds for its new and ongoing urban township projects.

"Megaworld's global equity offering reached an important milestone as this was the first international primary share offering for a Philippine real estate company since 1996," said Megaworld senior vice president Kingson Sian. "With over 50 institutional investors covered in the global management road show, Megaworld was successful in attracting mostly high-quality long-term investors with particular strong interest from European investors. This issue is a strong vote of confidence not only in Megaworld but in the prospects of the Philippine economy as well."

Megaworld will use the proceeds of the international offer to leverage its position as a leading player in BPO-related office development and in the residential condominium market.

Earlier, Megaworld chair Andrew Tan said the developer will spend around 80 percent of the proceeds to build office space for business process outsourcing (BPO) firms. Over the next five years, it plans to build around 400,000 square meters of BPO-ready office space food for 176,00 call center employees. These offices will be located in its flagship project Eastwood City and also in McKinley Hill and Newport City, two major ongoing projects.

The company is allotting P47 billion in capital expenditure for various major projects over the next 10 years. It will spend P20 billion of this to build BPO-related offices and retail properties to expand its rental income.

Belle Corp. '05 income up 234%

LEISURE PROPERTY DEVELOPER Belle Corp. reported a surge in its net income by 234 percent to P731 million in 2005 from P219 million in 2004, on the back of brisk sales.

This represented a net income growth of P512 million for the period covered, company officials said in a report to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

Net revenues from operating sources increased by 35 percent to P691.3 million last year from P512 million in 2004 due to higher sales of real estate products in 2005.

Belle's gross profit surged 24 percent to P437.2 million last year from P353.2 million in 2004.

Total operating expenses fell 4 percent to P127 million last year from P132.9 million in 2004, mainly due to lower administrative costs.

The company also booked net earnings of P64.4 million in 2005 from its investments in affiliates, from P56 million the previous year. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

CAP clients see hope in SC order

THE SUPREME COURT HAS directed Makati Regional Trial Court judge Romeo Barza not to dismiss the petition lodged by hundreds of clients of pre-need firm College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP).

The high court instead ordered the Makati judge as well as CAP officials to submit their respective comments over the suspension of tuition payments—a petition filed by CAP and approved by the Makati trial court.

Also, CAP's clients are asking the Supreme Court to compel the troubled pre-need firm to continue tuition payments to its plan holders.

"After deliberating on the petition for review ... the Court, without giving due course, resolves to require the respondents to file (a) comment thereon, not a motion to dismiss, within ten days from notice," the High Court's second division said in a one-page resolution dated March 20.

CAP legal counsel Gilbert Reyes said however that the pre-need firm expected the High Court's resolution.

"The respondent is told not to file a motion to dismiss," Reyes told INQUIRER. "This does not mean that CAP may not seek the outright dismissal of the petition in its comment."

He also said that the recent Supreme Court order does not affect a pending court decision on CAP's rehabilitation plan which it filed with Branch 61 of the Makati RTC.

"More importantly, the Supreme Court petition does not stay the rehabilitation case proceedings, which will simply proceed as if no petition is pending with the Supreme Court," Reyes said.

Last March, a group of 336 pre-need plan holders filed a petition before the Supreme Court to reverse the Makati RTC's decision allowing CAP to suspend payment of its obligations.

The plan holders were represented by the law firm of Syquia Pascual-Lopez & Santos.

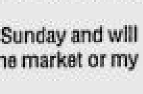
They also asked the high court to cancel a Dec. 16, 2005 order granting CAP's petition for corporate rehabilitation.

The plan holders said rehabilitation proceedings should not be used to cover up and perpetuate alleged fraud.

CAP has about 780,000 plan holders. Its license to sell securities was suspended in 2004. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

R and R

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

DEAR READERS: By the time you read this, I will be winging my way to Singapore with my family. I can only take a break at Christmas and Holy Week, as I am married to the newsletter.

I will be back on Sunday and will write either about the market or my vacation.

Meanwhile, I wish you all a restful Easter, a time to recharge your spiritual self.

CURRENCIES

April 10, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.826651	1.000000	51.1010
Japan	Yen	0.006989	0.008455	0.4321
United Kingdom	Pound	1.441514	1.743800	89.1099
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106579	0.128929	6.5884
Switzerland	Franc	0.635153	0.768344	39.2631
Canada	Dollar	0.719265	0.870095	44.4627
Singapore	Dollar	0.514566	0.622471	31.8089
Australia	Dollar	0.601376	0.727484	37.1752
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.193523	2.653505	135.5968
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220411	0.266631	13.6251
Brunei	Dollar	0.512970	0.620540	31.7102
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000092	0.000111	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.021674	0.026219	1.3398
UAE	Dirham	0.225092	0.272294	13.9145
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.209700	61.8169
Argentina	Peso	0.268611	0.324939	16.6047
Brazil	Real	0.387099	0.468274	23.9293
Denmark	Kroner	0.133979	0.162075	8.2822
India	Rupee	0.018589	0.022487	1.1491
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.225429	0.272702	13.9353
Mexico	New Peso	0.074247	0.089817	4.5897
South Africa	Rand	0.134904	0.163193	8.3393
Korea	Won	0.000868	0.001050	0.0537
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025558	0.030917	1.5799

Stocks fall ahead . . .

From page B1

percent at P347.50 after the conglomerate on Friday announced a share reclassification plan which will result in an issuance of 58 million new class-B preferred shares.

PLDT closed unchanged at P1,975 after the company's American Depository Receipts rose in New York Friday.

Bank of the Philippine Islands was also unchanged at P62, as was rival Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. at P38.50.

Dealers said they expected light trade for the rest of the shortened week. *AP*

BOI-registered projects hit ₱5.5B

Q1 investment flows slower than last year; seen to pick up in a few months

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS HAS APproved 40 new projects worth of P5.52 billion for registration and incentives in the first quarter of the year.

This brought to P20 billion, or a third of the amount posted in the same period last year, the total investments committed to the Department of Trade and Industry, through attached agencies BOI and Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza), during the first three months of the year.

Last week, the Peza said it was able to register a P14.52 billion worth of investment projects from January to March.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez, who is also the BOI's managing head, said the 40 projects registered by the BOI during the quarter would create 4,900 new jobs.

Hernandez added that the agency's simplified registration process brought in four projects worth P161.7 million in the last week of March.

These projects include Silverstar Homebuilders Inc.'s P79-million project in Cavite and 8990 Housing Development Corp.'s P75-million venture in Lapu-Lapu City. Both projects are related to mass housing developments that would generate 180 jobs and 165 jobs, respectively.

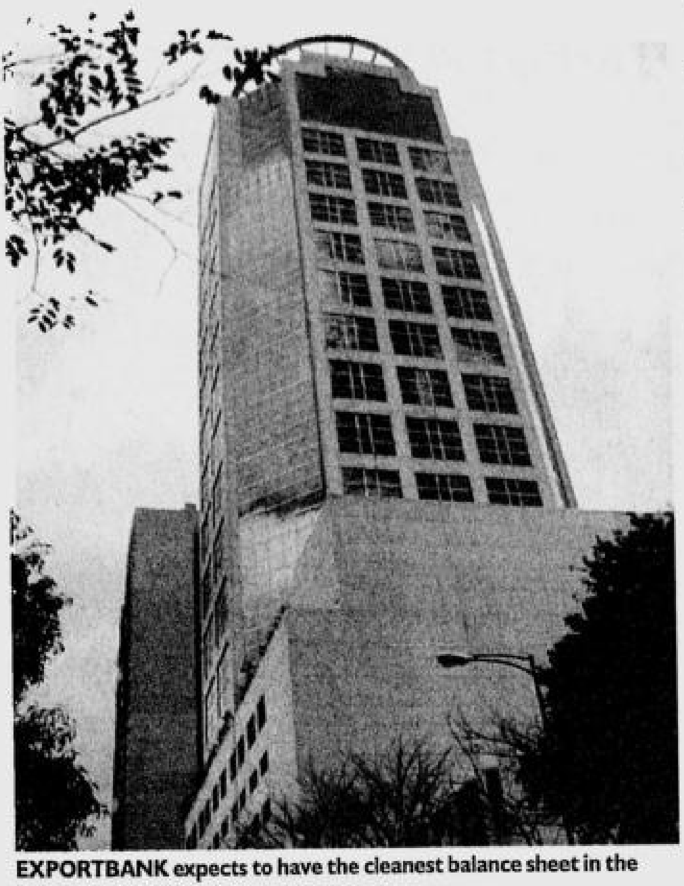
The two other ventures are NXY Corp.'s P4.7-million fashion garments manufacturing project in Pasig City and Unicreative Inc.'s P3-million project in Pampanga where it would engage in making gifts, toys, decors and furniture.

Hernandez said investment flows were relatively slow at the start of 2006, saying more capital would probably pour in at the latter part of this year.

Last year's first-quarter performance also showed a contraction as the P65.6 billion worth of projects registered was only half of the P129.9 billion posted in the same period in 2004, which included that year's biggest investment commitment—GNPower Ltd.'s P96.52-billion power complex with a combined cycle power plant.

As for Peza, some of the biggest projects registered in the first quarter included those of economic zone developer Jovima Management and Development—operation and maintenance of a P115.2-million, seven-story building and of a P79.7-million four-story building.

Also approved during the period was a P34.7-million back office transaction processing operation, a P32-million manufacturing facility for protective tapes and films for liquid crystal displays, and P24.6-million contact call center.



EXPORTBANK expects to have the cleanest balance sheet in the industry soon.

Exportbank selling ₱10B worth of NPLs

By Doris C. Dumlao

EXPORT AND INDUSTRY BANK has agreed to sell P10.1 billion worth of soured loans to a unit of German lender Bayerische Hypo- und Vereinsbank AG.

These nonperforming loans represent the last block of bad assets inherited by Exportbank from the defunct Urban Bank group in 2002.

Exportbank disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that the sale was approved by its board of directors.

The banks said it was "poised to have the cleanest balance sheet in the banking industry as it reduces its nonperforming asset to zero."

To minimize the impact of the sale on the bank's financial position, a P7-billion soft loans from Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. is seen to minimize the impact of this transaction to the financial condition of the bank.

Early last week, Exportbank also approved the sale of P3.2 billion worth of idle pieces of property to D.B. Zwirn & Co., L.P.

"We are proud to have fulfilled a major commitment to our shareholders," Exportbank president Benjamin Castillo said in a statement.

"The bank enters an exciting phase with its new financial strength and a strategic partnership with its shareholders. The blend of local expertise with global best-in-class processes is expected to create more opportunities for the bank to provide responsive, efficient and reliable service to its customers," he added.

Early this year, the bank beefed up its management team with key appointments to the sales and customer relationship management sector. The bank also announced the creation of the wealth management group to offer specialized services and to manage the needs of a growing portfolio of high-networth individuals and institutions.

These initiatives are part of Exportbank's strategy to provide expanded and high-value bank products and services, Castillo said.

"We are pleased with the developments taking place and the bank welcomes this tremendous opportunity to renew its commitment to be a valued partner to our customers," said Castillo.

Exportbank earlier obtained P3 billion in fresh capital infusion from major stockholders led by the Lippo group of Indonesia and the local Yao group, together with Extra Year Investments Ltd., the designated investment vehicle of the RZB group of Austria and AO Capital Partners Ltd. of Hong Kong.

The additional capital, along with the PDIC assistance, intended to strengthen the bank's capital base in the light of the effects of the new international accounting standards and the Philippine financial reporting requirements on the capital of banks now being implemented by the BSP, and in preparation for the requirements of Basel II which shall be implemented in 2007.

Major stockholder Lippo group is grooming Exportbank to become one of the Philippines' top 10 banks over the long haul and have hired Albert Cheok, an ex-Hong Kong Monetary Authority official, to be its country representative.

BIR told to press for payment of PDIC's back taxes, penalties

By Michelle V. Remo

A CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE has told the Bureau of Internal Revenue to collect all the P7.6 billion in alleged back taxes, including penalties, owed by Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC).

The Congressional Oversight Committee on Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (COCCTRP), which supervises the BIR's compromise settlement deals, said it believed there was not enough reason for the BIR to accept PDIC's compromise settlement offer.

The COCCTRP, headed by Sen. Ralph Recto and Rep. Jesli Lapus, also said it had started the review of the compromise settlements entered into by the BIR, particularly under the term of Commissioner Jose Mario Bunag, to determine whether the revenue agency had exercised prudence in entering those deals.

"The COCCTRP initially observed that the Commissioner (Bunag) had agreed to certain taxpayers' offer to compromise their tax liabilities on grounds that the proposed or final assessments were based on difficult or doubtful questions of law and not necessarily on factual issues," the committee said in a statement.

The BIR had pressed the PDIC to pay unpaid value-added taxes, income taxes and penalties said to be worth P7.6 billion.

PDIC said it had not been paying taxes because it believed it should be tax-exempt since it was a government-owned and -controlled corporation whose function was inherited from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which enjoyed tax perks. It later offered a settlement of P1.5 billion which was accepted by the revenue agency.

In line with this offer, PDIC had paid the BIR P1.5 billion even while the tax case on this was still being heard by the Department of Justice.

PDIC also offered to pay the BIR another P2.3 billion if the DOJ ruling would be in favor the revenue agency. But should the DOJ rule in favor of PDIC, the bank insurer will not longer make additional payment to the BIR.

Aside from the PDIC case, the BIR is also studying the proposed compromise on the tax liabilities of offshore banking units and foreign currency deposit units.

The BIR said OBUs and FCDUs owed the government about P30 billion in unpaid documentary stamp taxes and other taxes since the law lifting their tax perks was implemented in 1998.

The Bankers Association of the Philippines, representing OBUs and FCDUs, said the banks should not be paying the taxes because the provision of the Tax Code that granted the tax perks was only accidentally removed by Congress.

CDC, Transco to build ₱500-M transmission line

By Abigail L. Ho

STATE-RUN NATIONAL TRANSMISSION Corp. (Transco) and Clark Development Corp. will jointly construct a P500-million transmission line that will ensure adequate and reliable power supply for both the Clark economic zone and a planned 288-hectare technopark there.

Transco president Alan Ortiz said the state firm and the economic zone would split the expenses for the line, with Transco to partly finance it using internally generated funds.

"We're wracking our brains to find the financing for this project. (Transco) suggested that we just share the expenses," he said.

He said Transco and CDC expected the 25-kilometer 230-kilovolt transmission line to be operational by the end of next year, in time for the full operation of the planned P1.3-billion Clark Technopark.

CDC has drawn up plans to build a technopark within the ecozone to provide a new venue for locators wanting to establish operations in the Philippines.

As an incentive for investing in the area, locators in the Clark ecozone are enjoying preferential rates from the National Power Corp.

Power delivery, however, should be beefed up as electricity demand in the zone has been growing steadily.

Apart from being a good location for manufacturing firms, the Clark ecozone is also considered as one of the best places outside Metro Manila to set up business process outsourcing operations. Other areas with the best potential for this business include Subic in Zambales, Batangas, Bacolod, Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, Cagayan De Oro and Dumaguete.

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3 months	3.2500%	3.3750%	3.3750%	3.4375%
6 months	3.2500%	3.3750%	3.4375%	3.5000%
12 months	3.3750%	3.4375%	3.5000%	3.6250%

*Quoted rates are subject to change without prior notice. Rates are on per annum basis and subject to 7.5% withholding tax.

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Gov't gets go-ahead to bid MRT 7 project

From page B1

rules, the government must give interested bidders the right to improve on the initial offer of the original project proponent.

Once the counter bids are submitted, however, the original proponent will have the right to match the best offer of the counter bidder—a right granted to him by virtue of his initiative as an unsolicited project proponent.

The Swiss challenge scheme was last used in the controversial Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan (CBK) power plant, which pitted Argentine industrial giant Impsa—the original proponent—against a consortium led by the influential Lopez family.

Castañares said the Neda Board, headed by President Arroyo, met last week and instructed the DOTC to move to the Swiss challenge phase.

"This [Swiss challenge] process will last between three and four months," he said.

The DOTC official said the rules on the bidding procedure would be published after Holy Week, adding that proponents would likely be foreign companies due to the limited ability of local firms, especially in terms of funding and expertise.

The entire MRT 7 project is conservatively valued at $1.2 billion.

Castañares added that the government would also require bidders to put up a bid bond of "not less than $100 million" to discourage nuisance bidders. Past big-ticket state projects attracted bidders with little or no technical expertise and funding, but would later try to secure their hold on the scheme through backroom dealings with concerned government agencies.

Castañares said he expected actual civil works and construction on the MRT 7 project—which will run from North Ave. in Quezon City to Bulacan—to begin a year from the start of the Swiss challenge proceedings.

"It will depend on the project approval," he said.

The DOTC official said the government wanted to ensure that the project would be "deficit-neutral" in that expected tax proceeds from project-related real estate developments would offset its costs.

'Hot money' inflow thinned in 1st quarter

From page B1

bond offering early this year were not captured as they went directly to government coffers.

Despite the slower influx, the BSP said foreign investors remained "positive" with net inflows for the month of March hitting $91.9 million. The inflows of hot money for the month, however, shrunk from the $514.8 million last February and $271.6 a year ago.

"Factors which may have contributed to the net inflow in March included the continuing strength of the peso and OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances, the extension of the Special Purpose Vehicle Law, which would further reduce the nonperforming assets of banks, the record earnings of a number of listed firms, and government's report that its actual budgetary deficit in February was again significantly below the programmed level," the BSP reported.

For the first quarter of the year, registered foreign portfolio investments totaled $1.47 billion and consisted of the following: Philippine Stock Exchange-listed shares, $1.13 billion (77 percent of total) and placements in peso-denominated government securities of $336.1 million (23 percent).

These investments were funded with new inward remittances of foreign exchange converted into pesos through banks operating in the Philippines.

By country of origin, 81 percent of the new registered investments came from the United States, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

"Foreign investments in PSE-listed shares fell by 31 percent from the first quarter of last year. The decline was traced partly to the inclusion in the first quarter 2005 report of substantial investments in shares that were made in previous years but which were registered with the BSP only in March 2005," the BSP reported.

"Moreover, foreign investments in IPOs of Manila Water Co. and SM Investments Corp. last year were larger than the investments in First Gen IPO and Universal Robina additional stock offers in February this year," the BSP added.

SM
PRIME
HOLDINGS

Notice of Regular Annual Stockholders' Meeting
April 26, 2006, 3:00 p.m.
Rigodon Ballroom, Manila Peninsula Hotel
Makati City

To all Stockholders:

Please take notice that the 2006 annual meeting of the stockholders of SM PRIME HOLDINGS, INC. will be held on April 26, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. at the Rigodon Ballroom, Manila Peninsula Hotel, Makati City. The proposed agenda of the meeting is set forth below:

AGENDA

1. Call to order.
2. Certification of notice and quorum.
3. Approval of minutes of annual meeting of stockholders held on April 25, 2005.
4. Annual Report.
5. General ratification of the acts of the Board of Directors and the management from the date of the last annual stockholders' meeting up to the date of this meeting.
6. Election of directors for 2006-2007.
7. Appointment of external auditors.
8. Other matters.
9. Adjournment.

The Board of Directors has fixed the end of trading hours of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) on March 27, 2006 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice of and to vote at such meeting and any adjournment thereof.

Makati City, March 7, 2006.

BY THE ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

[sgd.]
EMMANUEL C. PARAS
Corporate Secretary
SM PRIME HOLDINGS, INC.

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Aries Espinosa

Gunn Report shows humor wins awards

THE WORLD'S CREATIVE GROUPS seem to have gotten into a giggling spell in 2005, or so says The Gunn Report - a compilation of the world's most awarded multimedia ads. The Gunn Report 2005 reveals that TV ads that used humor as either the main concept, tone, manner, or execution, gathered the most number of awards from at least the top 50 advertising contests worldwide last year. AdBoard presented reels of TV ads from The Gunn Report 2005 recently in front of advertisers, ad agency creatives, students, and the media.

Majority of the featured TV ads showed wit and humor in selling its respective brands. Even advocacy campaigns such as Thailand's energy conservation defied convention by injecting humor in presenting a serious message. The amazing thing about this particular series of ads is that the message was not lost in the execution. It used the kind if humor that chides ignorance, complacency, and indifference to the serious issue of energy consumption, particularly of automotive fuel.

Other ads revealed a lot about the difference of social perception among participating countries. Although using humor as the similar creative handle, other countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Norway show that sex and sexuality are well tolerated in their markets. Asian countries still displayed conservatism while telling its global counterparts that humor transcends cultural differences. The Philippines' lone entry, however, could not be denied for its eye-opening advocacy ad on the plight of child prisoners in the country.

AdBoard chair Raul Alvarez reiterated the importance of continuously updating its members' knowledge and awareness about global standards in competitive advertising. In presenting The Gunn Report locally, Alvarez emphasized on "AdBoard's mission to create an environment where world-class advertising flourishes".

"Through this Gunn Report, we at the AdBoard hope that we can help come up with world-class advertising and win more awards in various international competitions. Although, being an advertiser myself, winning is not the only thing that we are after. First and foremost, we want our brands to sell. But before we are able to sell, we have to get the interest of our consumers going. If the commercial is creative enough and it creates top-of-mind awareness for the brand, then our consumers will begin to buy our products or use our service," Alvarez said.

AdBoard presented The Gunn Report free especially for its member organizations as a way of giving back what the members pay in the form of clearance fees and other membership dues. Alvarez promised to provide support to similar projects in the future, particularly those that help cultivate creativity and responsibility in advertising practice.

PUYAT STEEL PARTNERS WITH CONEX 2006 CONVENTION, EXHIBIT

United Architects of the Philippines (UAP), the accredited architects' professional organization and organizer of Conex06, has signed up Puyat Steel Corporation as its supporting partner for the Conex 2006 Construction Exhibit on April 27 to 30 at the Manila World Trade Center. Shown are (from left): Ka Kuen Chua, director of the 32nd UAP national convention, Geoffrey Yu, UAP chair for Conex06 marketing, Pacifico M. Nioko, sales manager of Puyat Steel and Albert S. Yu, UAP executive director for conventions and conferences; (back row, from left): Suzette Relucio, marketing officer of Puyat Steel, UAP officers Christopher L. Ong, Eugene G. Gan, and Pia Lamoste, Puyat Steel's senior marketing specialist with Albert Reyes of the UAP. Interested suppliers and exhibitors may call Conex hotlines at 412-3311, 412-3312, 412-6364 or e-mail conex2005@yahoo.com

Helping Filipinos become entrepreneurs

TO REMAIN IN THE FOREFRONT OF FASHION direct selling and networking for 14 years is a "no joke effort" in business. When all other entrepreneurs seem to mushroom in this specialized industry, Boardwalk persists to be solid and steadfast in its mission to help Filipinos become the entrepreneurs of the future.

At the helm of this ingenious corporation are power couple Bernard and Imelda Madera. Armed with nothing but their high hopes and burning desire to help others alleviate their means of living, Boardwalk grew from a garment manufacturing company to a successful leader in the industry of direct-selling and networking providing livelihood to many.

With Boardwalk, the welfare of the members comes first. It boasts of a unique and hybrid marketing scheme that sets it apart from the rest. According to business development head, Glenda Pingol, "What makes our business work is the fact that we get to help every Filipino family realize their dreams by offering them equal opportunity to avail of our business facility and start their own businesses with manageable investment. One could even grow their business and earn as high as hundreds of thousands with minimal investment as low as P500 only.

Boardwalk has strategically positioned their branches all over the country. Right now, they have 23 branches, 26 information centers and a fully computerized system which makes it easy for members to monitor their sales performances and their earnings wherever they are. To balance their expansion program, Boardwalk is continuously moving even to the far flung areas of the country to accommodate the needs of the growing number of Filipino consumers.

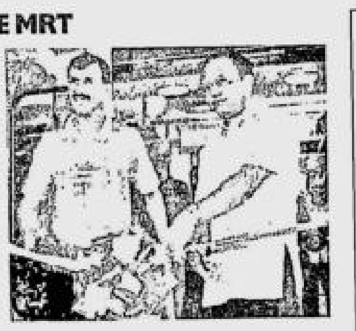
Boardwalk offers free membership to interested individuals all year round; there are more than 500,000 members and business partners today. Boardwalk president, Bernard Madera said, "What we offer is a risk-free business. We make our members set their own pace and encourage them to challenge themselves as to how much money they would like to earn. We groom them; help them develop their potentials to the fullest, in that way we value the presence of each other in the business. We practice co-existence as an important element to keep our business going and we are committed to keep it that way."

There are many ways to benefit from Boardwalk's innovative formula. A member can get lifetime basic discounts, earn from their personal selling activities or share the business privileges through recruitment and networking with their friends. They can get the chance to have their own career growth at their own pace and time. Boardwalk's partnership support with their members extends to the point of investing and developing them through continuous training and education, making sure that every partner is equipped with good marketing and entrepreneurial skill to guarantee success.

Boardwalk is very dynamic and responsive to the changing needs of the market. "We listen and listen to the requirements of the consumers with utmost sincerity which leads us to the development of products that are fashionable, tailored-fit and very much affordable which an ordinary consumer can enjoy without having to spend an entire paycheck", stated Pingol.

Fun, fashion and fulfillment is what Boardwalk is all about. Let Boardwalk become a part of your life now. For further details, Boardwalk is inviting all interested parties to go to the Boardwalk branches or business information centers nearest you or you can call tel. nos. 636-6321-23/631-9999.

MR. MUSCLE TRAIN AT THE MRT



SC Johnson Philippines general manager Dr. R.A. Schellner (left) and Metro Rail Transport Corp (MRT) operations director Commander Ronilo Bacolod cut the ceremonial ribbon during the arrival of the Mr. Muscle train at the MRT Taft Station in Pasay City. The event is part of the company's ongoing marketing promotion for the Mr. Muscle specialty cleaning product line.

TRANS SPORT SHOW 2006 SPONSOR

Organized by Trade Show International Inc (TSI), Trans Sport Show 2006, the country's biggest and most prestigious annual motoring event is all set to unfold this April 26 to 30, at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. Concorde Car Accessories Center is this year's Platinum Sponsor. The company carries some of the top name brands in the market and has seven branches located in different SM Malls. Shown after the contract signing are (from left): Leo Castandiello, Concorde executive assistant; Isabel Malonzo, TSI ad and promo manager; Sophia delos Santos, TSI president and John Sherwin Sy, Concorde operations manager.

MMP HONORS TOP SALES AGENTS

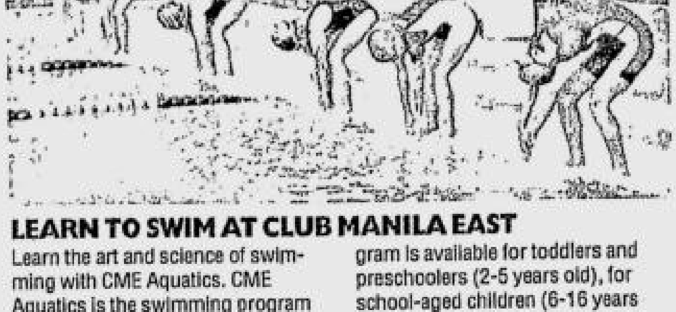
Manila Memorial Park

Manila Memorial Park recently honored its top sales associates with a Sales Awards celebration at the Makati Sports Club. With the theme, 'Our Sales Force, Our Strength', MMP presented the Top Agency Manager award to Gregorio P. Alcantara, Jr. of G. Alcantara & Associates for besting all other sales agencies in sales and recruitment performance for Calendar Year 2005. Shown in photo is Alcantara (center) receiving his award from Enrique B. Lagdameo, MMP executive vice president (right) and Dennis G. Lopez, MMP senior vice president (left).

UNILAB RUNS COUGH CLINIC FOR KIDS

MEDICAL MISSION
In cooperation with

United Laboratories Inc (Unilab) recently conducted the Solmux Kiddie Cough Clinic in Betty Go Belmonte Elementary School at Brgy. Dona Imelda, Quezon City. Some 4,500 patients, mostly elementary students, were treated. A mothers' class was also conducted for the mothers. The Solmux Kiddie Cough Clinic is one of the year-long runs of medical missions Unilab has been conducting to benefit indigent patients nationwide. This is consistent with Unilab's mission of providing millions of Filipinos with access to safe, effective and affordable healthcare. Unilab's Consumer Health Group organized the medical missions that will run until the end of the year in key cities and barangays nationwide.

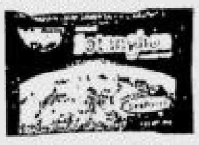


LEARN TO SWIM AT CLUB MANILA EAST

Learn the art and science of swimming with CME Aquatics. CME Aquatics is the swimming program of Club Manila East. With CME's sun screened pool and its new 25-meter 6-lane competition pool, students enjoy learning the mechanics of basic and competitive swimming. CME Aquatics has produced a team that has now garnered awards in different competitions. The swimming program is available for toddlers and preschoolers (2-5 years old), for school-aged children (6-16 years old), and for adults. CME Aquatics has started its summer class of 2006 on March 20. Succeeding classes follow every two weeks thereafter. For more information, contact Club Manila East at 660-2801 to 05 or 658-2065. Or visit its website at www.clubmanilaeast.com.

Product FILES

An ideal meal for Lent



THIS LENTEN SEASON, observing religious practices like fasting and abstinence becomes a so much easier thanks to the variety of meatless but tasty choices like Nissin Sotanghon in Seafood flavor. A delightful mix of spices and flavors that were made with the seafood lover in mind, Nissin Sotanghon's Seafood flavor has a distinct shrimp taste laced with herbs and spices. What makes it even more convenient is that the firm, glass noodles cook in just 3 minutes so you can enjoy your Seafood Sotanghon in an instant, leaving you more time to do more important things like spending quality time with your loved ones or taking time out on your own. Whether you enjoy it as a filling snack or a light meal, Nissin Seafood Sotanghon makes for the ideal food choice this season of Lent especially during the Holy Week.

A life-cleansing advice from C-Lium Fibre

IF YOU STILL HAVEN'T ADOPTED A HEALTHY lifestyle, let this Lenten season be a time for change. Taking good care of your body is in itself an act of thanksgiving. Keep fit and healthy by eating the right food and exercising regularly. These activities would help cleanse your body by ridding it of toxins. Fibre is best known for its cleansing quality. A diet high in fibre is guaranteed to wash your system of impurities that are often the breading ground of various kinds of diseases. Dietary fibre is available through C-Lium Fibre. A tablespoon of C-Lium Fibre powder mix combined with your favorite drink, or five C-Lium Fibre capsules taken twice a day, provides for your required daily fibre intake. Available at Mercury Drug outlets, Watsons, and other drugstores nationwide.

C-Lium FIBRE
40 SACHETS

Giggles Baby Wipes takes good care of your baby

SHOW YOUR BABY THAT YOU CARE WITH Giggles Baby Wipes. Giggles Baby Wipes are unscented, silky soft and extra thick like a soft washcloth. They don't irritate the skin and eyes for they are gentle enough to clean your baby's face and hand. Plus, they are formulated with aloe lotion contents that gently moisturize your baby's delicate skin. Most importantly, Giggles Baby Wipes are ideal for baby's daily skin care because they are alcohol-free and compactly packaged for travel and home use. Giggles Baby Wipes are exclusively distributed by Gentro Phils Inc, and available at SM, Watson's, Robinson's, Big R, Landmark, Puregold, Isetann, Cash & Carry and other leading supermarkets and department stores nationwide.

14TH CONSTRUCTION SHOW CEBU

Two of Cebu construction industry's movers, Hardwares Consolidated Inc (HCI) and L.A. Ducut and Company Inc (Ladci), renew their partnership to propel the construction industry to bigger heights via staging the 14th Construction Show Cebu. Present during the signing of agreement are (seated from left): Hanley Ong (HCI-VP internal); Lilibeth Ducut-Abais (Ladci's managing director); and Collin Go (HCI president) together with other HCI officers and board of directors (standing from left): Charles Kenneth Co (director); Erwin Guanzon (PRO); Bernard Vonn Sia (director); Nestor Uy (immediate past president); Allan Kent Ong (VP External); Jeffrey Sinco (director); Charles Ong Bongien (treasurer); Felomino D. Ang (director) and Michael Ho (director). The 14th Construction Show Cebu will be held from June 2-5, at the Cebu Trade Hall, SM City, Cebu. For details please contact L.A. Ducut & Company at (Manila) 873-8202, 873-8876, 0916- 6973207; (Cebu) (032)232-3729, (032)412-9463 or e-mail constructionshow@laducut.com.

Bits Clips

Sun Cellular's IDD Top 10

SHARE AND ENJOY YOUR SUMMER WITH friends and family members abroad with Sun Cellular's low rate IDD Top 10 service! IDD Top 10 lets you enjoy longer talk time for only US$ 0.10/minute to the US, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Guam, and Macau. What's more, every time you buy an IDD Top 10 call card, you also get the chance to win cool prizes with IDD Top 10's "Pick-a-Prize" raffle promo. This special summer treat is offered to prepaid subscribers who will buy an IDD Top 10 call card at accredited dealer outlets and stores nationwide from April 1 to May 31. It's so easy to join. Each IDD Top 10 call card you buy entitles you to draw from the "Pick-A-Prize" raffle jar - just present your corresponding receipt from the store of purchase to Sun's promo representative. Prizes will be given to lucky winners instantly. The more IDD Top 10 Call Cards you buy, the more chances you have of winning cool prizes you can use for the summer. Accredited dealer outlets and stores included for this promo are Wellcom, ADI, E-phone, Comworks, Quick.com, POS, Graphic, Spacecom, and SM Department stores (via SM Information Counters). IDD Top 10 is a permanent service from Sun Cellular. To know more about the IDD Top 10 service and the "Pick-a-Prize" raffle promo, call Sun's 200 Hotline on your Sun mobile, or 395-8000. You may also visit any of the Sun Shops.

A Lenten treat from Greenwich

WHETHER YOU ARE STRICTLY observing a no-meat diet this Lenten season or not, Greenwich's new pasta preparation should work up your appetite. Help yourself to a delightful serving of Greenwich Alighetti - pasta with aligue (crab fat) sauce, real ripe tomatoes, and tasty crab sticks. This seasonal offer is great any time of day: as heavy breakfast, brunch, appetizing snack, or luscious dinner. It's a healthy and satisfying meal by itself that would be great to share with friends or family. Get it at any Greenwich store nationwide for only P69. Alighetti is served with crunchy Garlic Stix. Rush to the Greenwich store nearest you or call Greenwich Delivery 819-4000 for Metro Manila delivery-Siguradong on time!

SNHS '46 Diamond Jubilee

SAMAR NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES of Class '46 are invited to its Diamond Jubilee on April 24 to 31. This once in a lifetime reunion shall coincide with this year's SNHS alumni homecoming. For details, contact Dr. Pablo Tan Sr. at (055)251-2867 or Paz del Rosario at (055)356-1121.

"My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from Him;
He alone is my rock and my salvation;
He is my fortress, I will never be shaken."
Psalm 62:1

VIRGILIO H. CARDEÑO

Peacefully joined our Creator
on April 9, 2006 at the age of 59.

His beloved wife **Edith Alcordo Cardeño**; children **Emily Cardeño & Paulito Cardeño**; father **Mateo Cardeño** (†); mother **Florencia Hilario Cardeño**; sister **Dolor Cardeño**; brother **Gary Cardeño**, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Del Pilar Room, Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 12, 2006 at the Manila Memorial Park after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

The Board of Directors, Officers and Staff of

BACNOTAN CONSOLIDATED INDUSTRIES, INC.

mourn the untimely demise of

VIRGILIO H. CARDEÑO

who peacefully joined his Creator
on April 9, 2006.

His remains lie in state at the Del Pilar Room,
Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park,
Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 12, 2006
at the Manila Memorial Park after the
2:00 p.m. Mass.

So Dearly Loved...
So Fondly Remembered...
So Truly Missed...

In Memory of

CARMEN R. ILACAD

March 25, 1921 - April 11, 2002
On the
4th Anniversary
of her Rebirth to Eternal Life

Holy Masses will be offered today, Tuesday, April 11, 2006 at the following churches:

Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan	6:15 AM & 6:15 PM
Mary the Queen Parish, Madison St., Greenhills, San Juan	6:00 AM & 6:00 PM
St. Alphonsus Mary De Liguori, Magallanes Village, Makati	6:00 AM & 6:00 PM
St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Timog Ave., Quezon City	7:00 AM & 6:00 PM
Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows Ave., Quezon City	6:00 AM & 6:00 PM
Sacred Heart Parish, Sct. Ybardolaza St., Kamuning, Quezon City	6:00 AM & 6:00 PM
Monasterio de Sta. Clara, Katipunan Ave., Quezon City	6:00 AM
Nativity of Our Lady Parish, Maj. Dizon St., Marikina	6:00 PM

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

Our Beloved Father

ENGR. JOHN GUILLERMO BAUTISTA

March 27, 1936 – April 8, 2006

Peacefully joined our Creator on April 8, 2006 at the age of 70.

His loving children Antonio & Cecilia; Jose Corazon & Leah; grandchildren and great grandchildren; and all relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Resurrection 3 of Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., 12 G Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 12, 2006 at Eternal Gradens Memorial Park, Caloocan City, after the 3 p.m. departure.

Email sent by Ted
on March 23, 2005

Easter Morning

As the world sings triumphant cries
to heaven
over death that You conquered,
help us, Lord, tomorrow as well,
when the dresses are put away
and the candy is all eaten
and on with life we go
let us not forget.

The celebration of Your Resurrection
over death
is a celebration of life
that should continue
well beyond the sunrise service
and the music, rehearsed for days
prior;
it is beyond the sign of spring
beyond the lily
beyond new lambs
grazing in open fields.

Resurrection is a daily celebration
over fear;
man's greatest and most powerful
enemy.
Fear of tomorrow,
fear of our yesterdays,
fear of what shall become of our
young
our old
our unborn.
Resurrection is replacing fear
with physical action.

This alone,
the most touching and profound of
Your signs
that fear is dead
and belief in You brings,
not just hope
but life.

What better living parable could
You have brought?
All fear death. All.
Even in the garden,
You took on our fear
if for only moments,
it was as real as our fears can be real
and You knew then
that this single enemy
must be destroyed.

And, You sacrificed Your life,
leaving those who had been comfort,
and follower;
You left them behind,
to conquer fear.

I shall cling to this now,
and the tomorrows given me.
Peace and Thanksgiving lifted unto
You.

Amen.

1st Death Anniversary

TEODORO CHAN BORLONGAN

April 15, 1955 – April 11, 2005

"It was on holy week 5 years ago when urban bank underwent its crisis with bsp that led to its holiday a few days later. since then, holy week for me has been a painful recollection as well as a spiritual reflection for purpose. but I still look forward to the Easter."

Ted Borlongan
March 22, 2005

A year ago today at 12:30 p.m., Ted sacrificed himself for the sake of truth, justice and compassion. I ask you all to please help us get Ted to Heaven. **Please pray for Ted, especially at 12:30 pm today.** Please ask God to pardon his sins and faults, and summon him to Heaven. "If two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." ***...Matthew 18:19***

Ted's 1st year anniversary is on Holy Tuesday, April 11, and his 51st birthday is on Black Saturday, April 15. Please help us to help Ted find his Easter.

Thank you... Dolly, Kathy, Jonathan, Chris, Stephie

Masses for Ted will be offered today
at the following churches:

Christ the King, Greenmeadows	6 am, 7am, 6 pm, 7 pm
San Antonio Parish, Forbes Park	6:15 am, 7:30 am, 12 nn, 6 pm
Sta. Teresita Church, Sta. Mesa Hgts, QC	7 am
National Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, QC	7:30 am
Ateneo Rockwell Chapel	12:15 pm
Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Ave. QC	12:00 pm
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills	12 pm
San Beda Alabang Chapel	11:30 am
Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, West Triangle	6:30 am
Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Tierra Pura	6 am
Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish, Philam Homes	6:30 am
San Pedro Bautista Church, SFDM	6:30 am
St. Jude Parish, Manila	6:30 am
St. Paul the Apostle, Mother Ignacia, QC	7 am
Sacred Heart Parish, Kamuning QC	6 am
Christ the King, E. Rodriguez QC	6:30 am
San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish	6 pm
St. Francis Parish, Shaw Blvd	6 am, 6:30 am, 7 am, 6 pm
St. Joseph Shrine, Proj 3, QC	6:15 am, 12 nn, 6 pm, 7 pm

CLASSIFIEDS

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More Classified Ads on Pages A17 & A18

NOTICE OF LOSS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC THAT MR. ALBINO FERRER SERRANO RESIDING AT 68 NAVAL ST., CUPANG, BALANGA BATAAN HAD LOST HIS PASSPORT WITH SERIAL NUMBER: LL 780053.
(PDI – April 11, 2006)

CLASSIFIEDS

MOA sets into motion PGMA's scholarship program for call center workers

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE) recently took the lead in forging a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) effectively setting into motion a hallmark Presidential scholarship program crucial to sustaining the country's cyber services sector as an engine of jobs and economic growth. Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas signed the MOA for the Scholarship Program for Call Center Agents and other Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) workers with Presidential Adviser Arthur Yap, Director General Augusto Boboy Syjuco of the DOLE's Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and Rainerio "Bong" Borja, president of the Business Process Association of the Philippines (BPAP), at the Blas F. Ople Hall, DOLE, Intramuros. Sto. Tomas said that the MOA is in response to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's instruction to the DOLE and its skills development arm, the TESDA, to implement the scholarship program to hone the skills and proficiency of the country's cyber services workforce, and ensure jobs and investments growth. Applicants are accepted generally on the basis of their English proficiency, self-confidence, and computer literacy. She also noted that English-proficient call center workers earn some P15,000, and those with multi-lingual abilities could earn P25,000 a month.

R.I.P.

Andrea Velasquez Cruz

of Pasig, Metro Manila

Died peacefully in the grace of our Lord on Holy Monday at 12:56 a.m., April 10, 2006 at the age of 97.

"Woman, behold your son... Behold, your Mother"
("Seven Last Words", John, 19:26-27)

"Who ran to help me when I fell
And would some pretty story tell
Or kiss the place to make it well?
My Mother."
("My Mother", Stanza 6, by Ann Taylor)

Her bereaved children, grandchildren and great grandchildren:

- **Rodolfo & Cecille**
  - **Peewee & Abe**
    - **Miggoy, Gia & Jelo**
- **Avelino & Helen**
  - **Rissa**
  - **Franz & Anna**
  - **Tricia**
  - **Mary & Ricky**
    - **Renzo**
- **Octavio Jr. & Aida**
  - **Merlita**
  - **Gerald & Donna**
    - **Lyle**
  - **Frederick**
  - **Mark**
  - **Tina**
  - **Nikki**
- **Eduardo & Nanie**
  - **Rowena**
    - **Cyril**
  - **Edson & Imelda**
    - **Iris & Isiah**
- **Remedios & George (†)**
  - **Bong & Arlene**
    - **Ian**
  - **Tony & Jenny**
    - **Anthony, Jacob & Aiza**
  - **Dominic & Gayle**
    - **Georgette, Nikko & KC**
- **Antonio & Sandra**
  - **Carmela & Val**
  - **Patricia & Reno**
    - **Juan Paulo**
  - **Carlo**
  - **Pauline**

relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Christ the King Cathedral, Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Holy Wednesday, April 12, 2006 at the Pasig Catholic Cemetery following the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Christ The King Cathedral.

CLASSIFIEDS

Mercer conducts survey on global avian flu

WHILE EVIDENCE OF the global spread of avian flu increases, there is a striking gap between companies' concern about the impact of a human pandemic and actual pandemic planning, according to a global survey by Mercer Human Resource Consulting.

The survey, covering 450 companies in 38 countries and 26 industries, was completed in the first two weeks of March and is believed to be one of the most comprehensive and global surveys conducted on the subject to date.

"Despite the rapid spread of avian flu worldwide and critical concerns that a pandemic would significantly affect companies' profits and productivity, Mercer's survey established that only 47 percent of firms have started a business continuity plan and just 17 percent of organizations have a pandemic preparedness budget," said Rosaline Chow Koo, head of Mercer's health and benefits business for Asia Pacific.

"About one in four Asian survey respondents have budgeted for preparedness, compared to 12 percent of the respondents in Europe and 7 percent in the US," said Ms. Koo.

UN
DP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Contracting of Consulting Services for Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Program

The Development Support Services Center (DSSC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites local consultants to apply for eligibility and to bid for the subcontract on Technical Assistance (TA) on EEL Lamp Ballast and Luminaire Manufacturing of the project "UNDP-GEF-DOE Project Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Program (PELMATP)".

The Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Project (PELMATP) is intended to address the barriers to widespread utilization of energy efficient lighting (EEL) systems in the Philippines. It is aimed at contributing to the realization of the country's sustainable development objectives and its goal in reducing GHG emissions in the energy sector. It will specifically focus on the promotion of EELs energy efficient version of linear fluorescent lamps (i.e., slim tube triphosphor coated), CFLs, high intensity discharge (HID) lamps, ballasts (low loss electromagnetic and electronic) and energy efficient luminaires. The project will accelerate integration of EEL promotion programs to the energy conservation and energy efficiency (EC & EE) programs of the Philippines' Department of Energy (DOE), enhance private sector's involvement and appreciation of the benefits of EELs, and ensure that environmental impacts associated with the widespread use of EELs are mitigated. The project objectives will be achieved with the implementation of specific barrier removal programs that will involve-: (1) updating of policies, standards and guidelines on lighting applications; (2) institutional and technical capacity building; (3) consumer education and information dissemination; (4) development and implementation of appropriate financing mechanisms; and (5) mitigating environmental impacts of the widespread utilization of EELs.

To be able to attain said objectives, the project requires the services of a subcontractor who shall undertake the subcontract on Technical Assistance (TA) on EEL Lamp Ballast and Luminaire Manufacturing.

Under this component, the project seeks to provide assistance to local lighting product manufacturers to design, produce and make available affordable EELs in the market.

For interested parties, Bid Documents (Eligibility Requirements, Instructions to Bidders and Terms of Reference) may be secured personally, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PhP 1,000.00 for each Contract from the following address :

Development Support Services Center
United Nations Development Programme
30th Floor, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City
Tel. No. 632 901 0273 / 901 0271
Fax No. 632 901 0200 / 889 7177

The abovementioned Bid Documents will be released to all interested participants starting 17 April 2006 to 21 April 2006 only. The Bid Documents shall contain all instructions on the rules, procedures, dates and other schedules for the pre-bid conference and opening of bid envelopes, as well as further details on the scope of services required.

UNDP reserves the right to reject any or all the bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the most advantageous offer to the UNDP, for and in behalf of the Department of Energy. UNDP assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **ETHELIND B. CAPUNO**
Manager, DSSC

(PDI – April 11, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Professional Regulation Commission
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Professional Regulation Commission, with address at P. Paredes cor. N. Reyes St. (formerly Morayta St.), Sampaloc, Manila, hereby invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

Items to Bid for 2006 requirements	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Venue of Pre-bid Conference	Date/Venue of Submission and Opening of Bids	Non-Refundable Fee
Printing and Supply of Test Booklets for 2006 Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)	P6,533,100.00 At P0.61 per page (210,000 Test Booklets)	April 20, 2006 At 10:00 a.m. PRC Conference Rm. 2nd Floor, Main Bldg.	May 09, 2006 At 10:00 a.m. PRC Conference Rm. 2nd Floor, Main Bldg.	P5,000.00

Only bidders registered with the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) for procurement of goods and services shall be allowed to participate in the bidding process. Bidders may obtain the list of the registration requirements for procurement of goods and services at the Office of the BAC Chairman, Commissioner Renato B. Valdecantos, 2nd floor, PRC Main Bldg., starting on April 6, 2006. Start of the Issuance of Certification of Registration to bidders shall start on April 20, 2006.

Bid forms and the Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained by interested bidders starting on April 6, 2006 from the Office of the BAC Chairman.

The PRC Bids and Awards Committee shall screen the eligibility of prospective bidders based on their compliance with the eligibility requirements on a pass/fail basis, evaluate, and post-qualify bids based on a set of criteria of responsiveness to the Commission's need.

All particulars relative to the registration, eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids, and awards of contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA), and its implementing rules and regulations.

The Commission reserves the right to verify the veracity of any information or authenticity of any document submitted in the course of bidding and to undertake ocular inspection of offices and facilities of bidders. It likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality therein, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the PRC. It shall not assume any responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders or any expense incurred in the preparation of the bid, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) **LEONOR T. ROSERO**
Chairperson

(PDI-April 5 & 11, 2006)

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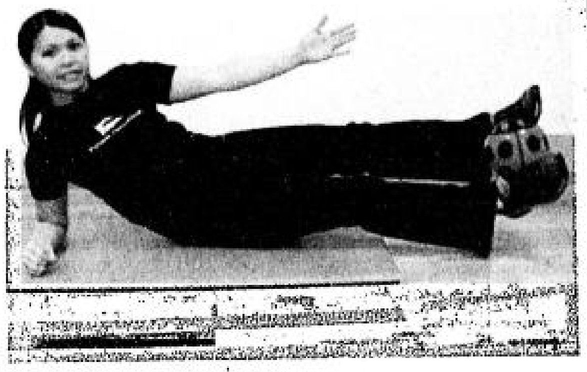
MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS
bago ang April 17 deadline.
6 DAYS TO GO
Ang Ating Kontribusyon Sa Bolsayon

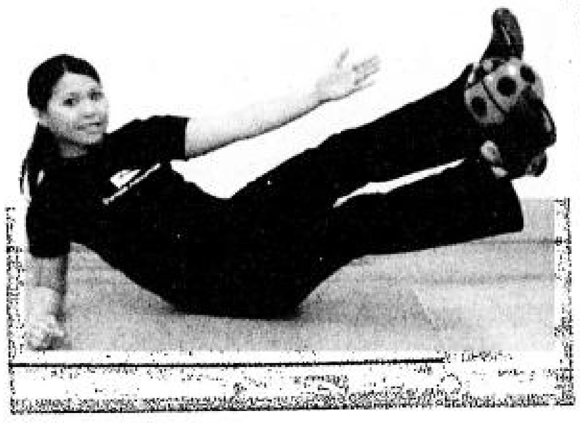
MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ● TUESDAY FITNESS ● WEDNESDAY 2BU ● THURSDAY FOOD ● FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Inner thigh and oblique lift

This Pilates-inspired exercise strengthens the inner thighs and the obliques (muscles that crisscross the waist).





Equipment:

Exercise mat and mini ball (you can use any small plastic or rubber ball you have at home).

Exercise technique:

1. Lie sideways with your elbow directly under your shoulder. Place the ball between your ankles.

2. Straighten your legs and bring them slightly forward. Gently flip your lower body backward so that you are facing the ceiling at an oblique angle. Raise your other arm to shoulder level for balance.

3. Exhale as you lift your legs; inhale as you lower them down.

Performance tips:

1. The mini ball helps you keep your legs together.

2. Pull up tall from the shoulders. Do not allow your shoulders to sag downward toward the mat.

3. Tighten up the muscles of the trunk and legs before you attempt to lift the legs off the mat.

4. Start and finish the exercise with the legs already lifted a few inches off the floor.

5. This is an advanced exercise. Do not do it if you have lower back problems.

Repetitions:

Do five to 10 repetitions on each side.

Beer may not be the only reason for that belly

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

IS THERE REALLY SUCH A thing as a beer belly or a beer gut?

According to a recent study, blaming beer for a big belly is not quite accurate. Researchers found that your drinking pattern may have more influence on how big a belly you will get from alcohol.

Abdominal height

Alcohol has calories and any source of excess calories will make you gain weight. But scientists at the University of Buffalo wanted to uncover the relationship between alcohol and fat specifically deposited in the abdomen.

They used a measurement called "abdominal height." This is the height of the abdomen from the torso when you lie on your back. It is an external indication of visceral fat or the fat that lies deep inside the torso surrounding the internal organs. This is the type of fat associated with heart disease and diabetes.

Drinking pattern

The study looked at frequency, intensity (how many drinks per drinking day), and type of drink.

Participants in the study were men and women between ages 35 and 79. On the average, they were overweight (body mass index of 28).

They were classified into daily drinkers, weekly but less than daily drinkers (drank more than one time per week but not daily) and less than weekly (drank less than one time per week).

Weekly drinkers were further divided into weekend-only drinkers (Friday, Saturday or Sunday) and throughout-the-week drinkers (drank on weekdays and weekends).

For this study, a "drink" was considered to be 355 ml of beer (12 ounces), 148 ml of wine (five ounces) and 37 ml of liquor (1.2 ounces). This is similar to the guidelines set by American health authorities for a "standard drink." The only difference is liquor, which is 1.5 ounces (straight or in a mixed drink).

Type of alcohol

Among women, wine drinkers had the lowest abdominal height and liquor drinkers had the highest. Beer drinking was not associated with "centrally located fat."

For the men, beer and liquor drinkers had similar abdominal heights and wine drinkers had the lowest height.

Ethnicity

Other studies found different results for varying ethnic backgrounds (the measurement used was waist-to-hip ratio). Could it be that different races metabolize alcohol differently? More research is needed.

Japanese: Only *shochu* (and no other type of beverage) was associated with a bigger belly. *Shochu* is similar to sake except sake is brewed and *shochu* is distilled.

French: Women drinkers of wine and beer had a bigger waist to hip ratio but no association was seen in men. Liquor had no effect for both sexes.

Caucasian: For men, there was a bigger waist-to-hip ratio for drinkers of beer, wine and liquor. For women it was only liquor and beer.

African-American: Beer, wine and liquor gave men a big belly but, for women, only beer and wine had an effect.

Swedes: Women drinkers were affected by liquor but not by beer or wine.

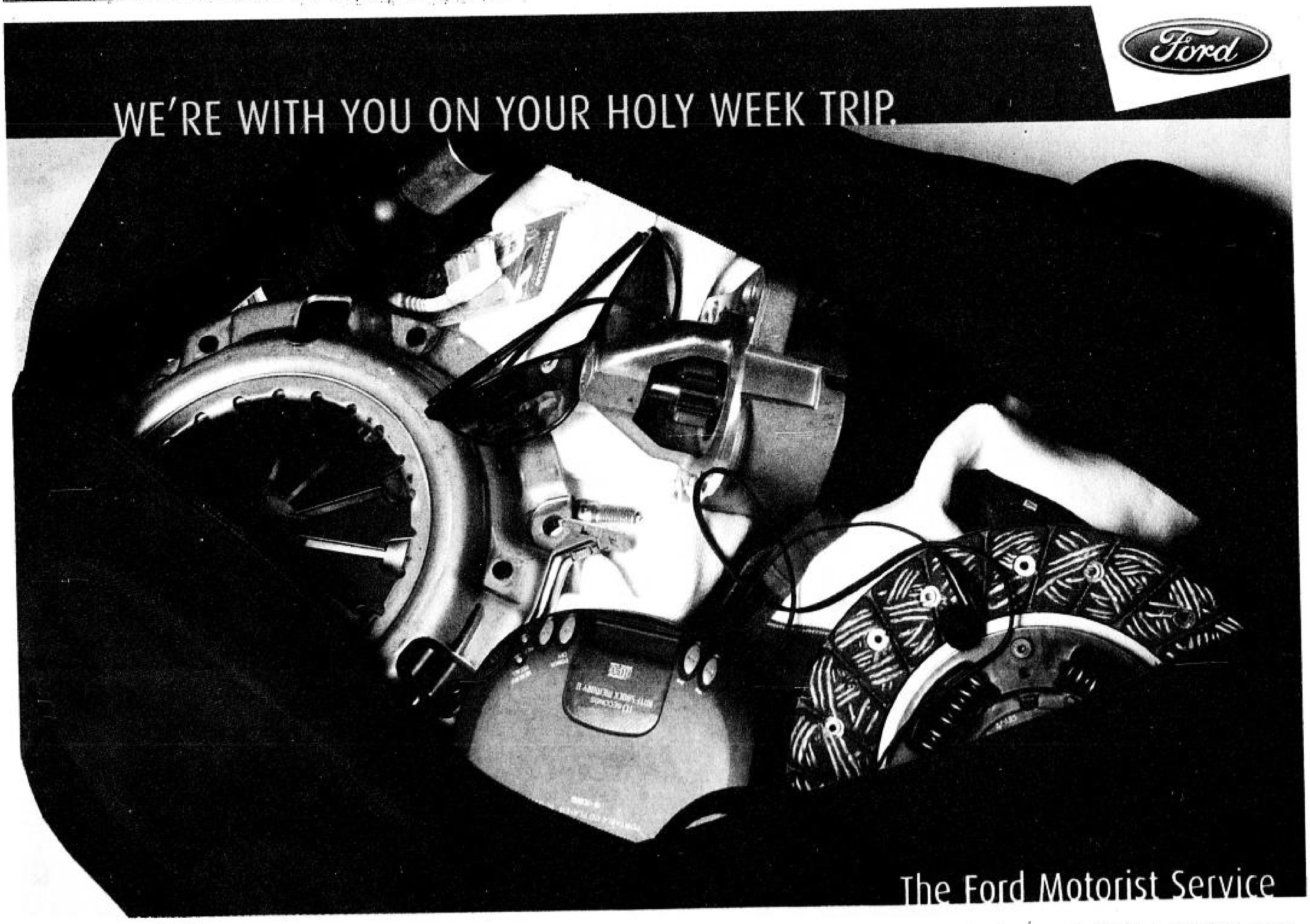
Czechs: There was no link between drinking beer and a beer belly in men and women.

Frequency

Women weekend-only drinkers had a greater abdominal height than those who drank the same amount but did so throughout the week.

In men, abdominal height remained the same whether they were

BEER/C3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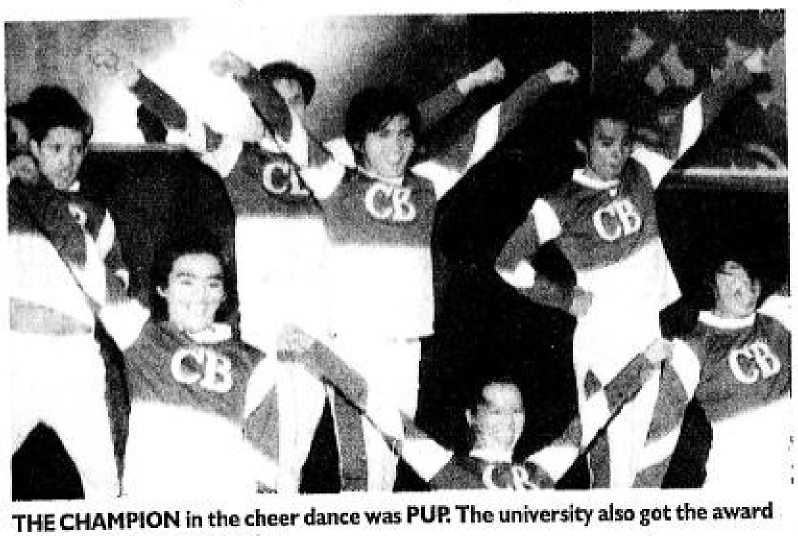


THE CHAMPION in the cheer dance was PUP. The university also got the award for biggest school delegation.

NBV Team 10: (standing) Rachelle Siapco of Lyceum, Lin Shan of DLSU, Michelle Banez of PUP, Mary Tan of CSB and Melanie Umali of San Beda College; Lemuelle Pelayo of Lyceum, CSB's Raphael Bediones and Naeem Badr, and PUP's Melchor Faustino and Zigmund Nicolas

THE GALS take the plunge in the NBV Serve Plunge Challenge.

MTV VJs Patty Laurel and John Joe ham it up.

Kickoff makes it official—summer's here

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

HOT summer fashion from Nautilus by PJ Aranador

CONTESTANT Melanie Umali shows off a hot summer ensemble from Speedo.

HEY, IT'S TIME FOR SUMMER fun again, *palanggas*.

That cool Nestea drew tons and tons of students from different schools to the NBC Tent at The Fort for the exciting and fun-filled NBV Serve summer kickoff party presented by, yeah, Nestea, the official drink of summer, natch!

Students from—okay, roll call time—Adamson University, Assumption College, Ateneo de Manila University, Centro Escolar University, College of St. Benilde, De la Salle University, Far Eastern University, Lyceum College, Manuel L. Quezon University, Mapua Institute of Technology, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, St. Scholastica's College, San Beda College, University of the East, University of the Philippines and University of Santo Tomas all had a blast during the bash, as popular bands Sugarfree, Hale and SpongeCola rocked the house.

The best part of the happening was the search for the NBV Team 10, which had 31 gorgeous students from different schools taking to the catwalk in summer's hottest looks from Nautilus by **PJ Aranador** and Speedo, dahlings.

Five stunning guys and five gals were chosen as members of NBV Team 10. They will be flown to Boracay in May for a chance to share the spotlight with top PMAP models, and enjoy the awesome Nestea Beach Volley 2006, summer's biggest event.

Members of NBV Team 10 automatically become junior image models of Nautilus by PJ Aranador, *palanggas*.

"The NBV Serve summer kickoff party is the perfect (way) to start another fun-filled and exciting summer event, May 4-6, highlighted by the Nestea Beach Volley 2006, a fashion show by the PMAP models, concert by Bamboo, plus other fun beach activities at Hey! Jude's Resort beachfront," said Nestlè AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager, *la simpatica*, **Tina Samaco**, *palanggas*.

This fab happening is being sponsored by Speedo, Mikasa, Cebu Pacific, Villa de Oro Boracay Beach Resort, Le Soleil de Boracay Hotel, Canon Powershot Digital Cameras, Club Ten Resort, D'Mall D'Boracay, Hey! Jude Resort, Schering-Plough Coppertone, La Salle Greenhiils, ClicktheCity.com, Crystal Sand Resort, Boracay Gold Crowne Club, Bantay Kalikasan ABS-CBN Foundation and Nautilus by PJ Aranador.

Hey, talk about sponsors by the tons, huh!

THE BIG THREE: Raymund Villaflor, Nestlé AVP head for consumer promotions and events; Eugene David, Nestlé senior VP and business executive manager; and Tina Samaco, Nestlé AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager

Well, why not? Everybody wants to get into the act with Nestea, *n'est ce pas*?

New jewel

Cyma, an awesome Greek restaurant concept by **Nino Zulueta** and **Robbie Goco**, is the latest jewel to reach the shores of stunning Boracay. It officially opened its wide doors with an all-white opening bash, *palanggas*. It has been fully packed since!

Although everyone came in their sexiest whites, the diverse backgrounds of guests gave the event lots of color. The excellent cuisine of Cyma definitely satisfied the craving of the diners. *Moi* knew many went back for more days later, *palanggas*.

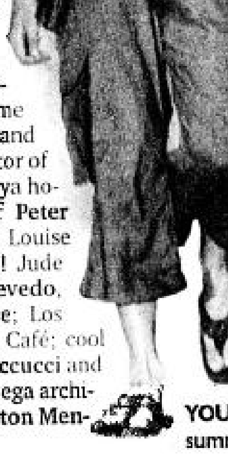
As wine flowed all night long, we rocked to the eclectic mix of tunes from exotic locales—Spain, Greece, Morocco, Paris, while being served yum-yummy appetizers and samplers of main courses from Cyma's super creative menu.

With a Mediterranean theme and tucked away in a quiet corner of the new D'Mall, away from the noise, the resto used the cool colors of the ocean—blue and white. The overall décor was simple and featured clean lines.

Early bird *moi* noticed enjoying the aperitifs **Iñigo** and **Maricris Zobel**; and Cebu-based **Chary**, **Sofica** and **Jon Aboitiz**

This was, *naturellement*, the calm before the afternoon storm, *palanggas*. The Boracay gourmand population dashed in like a hurricane—top local restaurateur **Paolo Occhinero** of True Food and Aria, with longtime girlfriend **Susan**; vivacious **Nadine** of the famed Real Coffee; steady twosome **Cheese Ledesma** of Nami and **Joel Ong**; successful contractor of Mandala Spa and the "in" Asya hotel, **Bacchus Zulueta**; chef **Peter** from Lemon Café; Jude and Louise from the one-of-a-kind Hey! Jude Bar and Resto; **Richie Quevedo**, formerly of Bamboo Lounge; Los Angeles Corrine of Organic Café; cool father and son **Freddie Paniccucci** and handsome **Giancarlo**; and mega architect and interior designer **Anton Mendoza**.

ANTHONY Perez de Tagle, Cheese Ledesma, Joel Ong and Connie Perez de Tagle



YOUNG, good-looking Lemuelle Pelayo models summer fashion from Nautilus by PJ Aranador.

As we savored the superb menu, we people-watched.

Moi couldn't miss the fun French connection there in full force, like **Tina Pluquet** with brother **Alex P.** and her new fiancé, **Martin Ruby**, plus a group of Parisian pals. They had a blast till dawn.

Gorgeous head-turners **Amanda Griffin** and Cyma's **Anna Cu-unjieng** swear by the Moussaka and Osso Buco.

And beautiful couple **Chris** and **Katrina Feist**; Manille-based Goco *famille*, including **Marieta Primicias Goco**, **Mana Goco** and Cyma partner **Gina Goco**, natch, added more energy to the bustling scene.

Cyma regular, ADB's **Antonio Ressano-Garcia**, with pals Portuguese Ambassador **José Caetano da Silva**, plus tons of expats added dash to the opening.

A delicious giant bowl of steamed mussels cooked in a delicate white wine, garlic, lemon, butter, parsley sauce; the to-die-for Saganaki, flaming cheese served with pita bread; Calamarakia, the most tender fried baby squid I've tasted outside of Spain and served with tzatziki; and the Greek Salad Horiatiki, were on the fantastic menu, among others, *palanggas*.

Here, there and just everywhere, making sure our wine and booze glasses were always full were gorgeous beauty and brains **Sunshine de Leon**, no less, who just breezed into town from a working stint in London; and close pal and partner Nino Zulueta.

Good-looking Los Angeles-based actor **Miguel de Leon**, played photographer, to help his sister Sunshine's latest project.

Clients were elbow to elbow at the cozy restaurant. The efficient staff kept the orders coming till way way past midnight, *palanggas*.

Hey, the Cyma Boracay *famille* includes Robbie Goco, Nino Zulueta, Bacchus Zulueta, Sunshine de Leon, **Roman Teehankee** and Gina Goco.

YOUNG achievers: Antonio Ressano Garcia, Sunshine de Leon, Nino Zulueta and Robbie Goco

JAMES Mackay

MARTIN Ruby, Tina Pluquet and Vikki Aquino

SIGALIT Djemal and Anton Mendoza

DONG Alegre and Freddie Paniccucci

NATURAL Sea Beauty WITH DEAD SEA MINERALS

EXPERIENCE the power of mud on your skin with Natural Sea Beauty Mud facial cleansing products: Mud Cleansing Gel, Purifying Mud Facial Scrub and Purifying Mud Mask. Buy any of these products and get a free vanity bag.

Discover the power of mud

USE THE MAGIC OF MUD TO pamper your skin.

With Natural Sea Beauty, a skincare line from L'Oreal Israel, you will discover that mud is not what it appears to be.

Composed of tiny particles of clay, mud is actually nature's most effective deep cleanser. It absorbs impurities from the skin's pores down to the last traces of makeup. At the same time, it replenishes the skin with the minerals essential for a healthy, radiant complexion.

One of the legendary beauties in history, Cleopatra, knew that and she got the most mineral-rich ingredients in the world, from the Dead Sea.

Cleopatra's beauty secret is what Natural Sea Beauty is about, using raw materials from the Dead Sea.

Try the unique mud facial cleansing products:

Mud Cleansing Gel is for all skin types. It unclogs pores and absorbs excess oil, dirt and makeup to purify, refresh and renew the skin, leaving it smooth and soft.

Purifying Mud Facial Scrub, for all skin types, contains tiny granules of mineral mud from the Tiberias Hot Springs. It removes dead skin cells while purifying and smoothing the skin to leave it clean, radiant and noticeably a tone lighter.

Purifying Mud Mask is a rejuvenating mineral mud that gently cleanses and moisturizes the skin. It absorbs excess oil to leave skin clean, refreshed, smooth and radiant.

When you buy any of these Natural Sea Beauty products you get a free vanity bag.

Natural Sea Beauty products are available at the following Watsons outlets: SM Manila; 2/F, SM Megamall, Bldg. A (Daimaru); Harrison Plaza; SM Megamall Department Store, Bldg. B; SM Makati Department Store; Greenbelt 1; Gateway Mall Cubao; SM Southmall Las Piñas; and SM North Edsa.

They are also available at Landmark and Ayala Cebu.

Cleansing guide for body, mind, spirit

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

ONCE IN A WHILE, YOU'VE GOT TO take a break—from work, pressures, bad habits, incessant worrying and run-away emotions. To keep you from breaking down under all that self-imposed weight, it's time to lighten your load.

You read right. It's self-imposed. We cause everything we experience today simply because we allow these concerns to become problems that lead to stress.

But it's never too late to repair the damage to our bodies, minds, hearts and spirit. And now is as good a time as any.

Just for a day

Can you take a break from the countless days devoted to things that "matter" most—pursuit of power, influence, love or money?

Here's how:

- Declare today a think-nothing-serious day. Simply ban any serious thinking.
- Make it also a do-nothing-serious day. Do nothing of great importance like closing contracts, meeting business partners or worrying about your house bills or loved ones.

Lighten your load

When you lighten the load on your shoulders, a sigh of relief instantly follows.

Body

- Quit the junk for a day. You know exactly what your body craves—salt, sugar, alcohol, caffeine (and the really lethal drugs that should be permanently banned).
- For 24 hours, eat only healthy food, drink only nutritious beverage. Stock up on vegetables and fruits that you can either eat as a salad or drink as juice.
- Walk briskly or visit a gym.
- Stop stuffing yourself. Stop eating after the first burp. If you follow this rule, you will literally unburden your stomach.
- In between meals, snack on something raw like vegetables/fruits. It may be a culture shock for some but it works wonders in recharging the body and eventually losing weight.

Mind

If it's all in the mind, then let's begin here.

- Remove the word "limits" from your mental vocabulary. It no longer exists. From now on, you do not know the meaning of the word they call limits for you have none.
- Plant in your mind a mental picture of a sunrise. Since the rising sun is a symbol of hope, then imagine the sun always rising from the east of your mind.

Each time you find yourself confused, simplify matters by invoking the newness of a morning sun that ought to get you back on track. Affirm: "Morning has broken. The sun rises in my heart."

- Fear less. In fact, challenge a fear today. Some may not be aware of the motives behind their actions. More often than not, they are motivated by fear. Face your fear squarely. The sooner you acknowledge it, the better for you.
- Unload your heart. Accept the pain, hurts, betrayals, disappointments then replace them only with good memories—love, laughter and joy.

Removing-worry exercise

On a piece of paper, write a letter to a trusted friend (that you don't intend to mail anyway). Write down your worries, explain why you worry, what caused them and, more importantly, how they can or cannot be resolved.

As soon as you write them, the solutions will emerge, slowly but surely.

- Choose the word survivor over the word victim. When you adopt the "survivor" programming in your head, you will begin to feel less and less a victim of life. And your perspective will change.

Go ahead. Celebrate "World Survivor's Day." Write down the word survivor on a brightly colored piece of paper, then place it in a most-frequently seen spot in the house. Seeing it day in, day out is enough to achieve outstanding results in your life.

Spirit

- Engage in spiritual exercise. Pray, meditate, reflect. Begin the day doing spiritual gymnastics. It flexes your muscle for facing any challenge.
- Be an expert at asking Heaven a question. Asking God is yet another exercise in trusting the Divine. When you ask, an answer always appears.
- Learn to read life. Reading life is an art. It begins with symbols, road maps, signs along the way. These visible manifestation or directional signs may be a sticker message on the back of a car while you are stuck in traffic roads.

Keep the faith, especially when you are at a low point in your life, a time when you are tempted to give up.

- Go to your spiritual shangrila. Yes, there is one! And it's inside you. Before you close your eyes at bedtime, make a quiet wish to be transported to an oasis of joy and inner peace.

Imagine a temple towering majestically before you. You are bathed in the radiant colors of this palace. This image will remain yours and you will revisit it each time you need to resurrect the healing power you need to renew yourself.

Your affirmation: "I invoke renewal in my life. Beginning today!"

Love and light!

Text CQ 2966 for Smart Health Beauty and Wellness Updates

Mary Magdalene, the woman Jesus loved

Part II

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime T. Licauco

THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP FOUND IN Nag Hammadi, Upper Egypt, in 1945 contains this very revealing passage:

"... The companion of the (Savior was)... Mary Magdalene. (But Christ loved)... her more than [all] the disciples, and used to kiss her [often] on her (mouth). The rest of the disciples were offended... They said to him, 'Why do you love her more than all of us?'

"The savior answered and said to them, 'Why do I not love you like her? When a blind man and one who sees are both together in darkness, they are no different from one another. When the light comes, then he who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness.'"

What I believe Christ was saying to them is this: "Even if I explain this to you, and you do not have the inner knowing, the gnosis, then you will still not understand. You are like the blind man who cannot see even if the light comes. But if you have inner vision or inner knowledge, you will understand."

This implies that Mary understood and therefore had no need for explicit explanation. She intuitively knew and understood her true role which the disciples apparently did not.

Favored

According to Elaine Pagels, who holds a doctorate degree from Harvard and author of the Gnostic Gospels, "the Gospel of Mary depicts Mary Magdalene (never recognized as an apostle by the Orthodox church) as the one favored with visions and insight that surpass Peter's. The Dialogue of the Savior (also part of the Nag Hammadi Library) praises her not only as a visionary, but as the apostle who excels all the rest. She is the woman who knew it all."

Mary Magdalene, after Christ's resurrection, became the intermediary between Jesus and the other disciples. As the constant companion of Jesus and the first witness of the Resurrection, it seemed only natural, as Michael Terdieu, editor of the Berlin Codex pointed out, that she had been accorded special revelations.

Instead of explaining why Mary Magdalene was not even considered an apostle when it was to her that Jesus Christ revealed the most secret teachings after his resurrection, not to Peter and the other disciples, the Church simply labeled those who advocated this view to be heretics.

But labeling a statement or belief heretical does not mean it is wrong. It only means it's different from the accepted or authorized belief.

For example, during the medieval period, it was heresy to believe that the earth revolved around the sun. In fact, the great astronomer Galileo was arrested by the Holy Inquisition because of such belief. He was made to retract this "heresy" or be burned at the stake. The Orthodox and accepted view at that time was that the sun revolved around the earth.

Unprecedented

The aggressive and often acrimonious smear campaign the Catholic church has unleashed on Dan Brown's novel, which the author himself admitted to be mere fiction, is unprecedented in modern literary history.

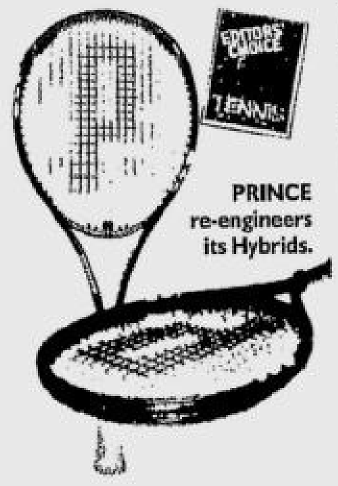
Church apologists took pains to point out every small artistic, historical, theological, biblical and even geographical errors Brown supposedly committed in his work, errors that are not essential to the story he was telling.

But Brown should be happy with the aggressive stance the Catholic church has taken against him. It will make his very popular book even more popular. More people who may not have been interested in reading the book will now want to know what the fuss is all about.

As usual, the Church will be at the losing end in this publicity game. Brown has the numbers. And with a movie starring Tom Hanks coming out soon, watch the sales of the book go even higher.

I wish the church also condemns my book "On Christianity, New Age and Reincarnation." That will ensure its place on the bestseller list.

Hybrids are more versatile



PRINCE re-engineers its Hybrids.

PRINCE, THE WORLD LEADER IN RACquet technology, has re-engineered two of its most popular products—the 03 Hybrid Shark and 03 Hybrid Hornet.

The reengineering is geared toward stability, power, speed and versatility. The products are available at popular prices.

Prince introduced its award-winning 03 Engineered Technology last year.

The Shark, best known as the racquet used by former Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova, offers great versatility for a wide range of players looking for power and control. With the addition of 03 Hybrid Technology, the racquet now has a higher sweet spot and greater stability for improved shot-making, rock-solid feel and deadly power.

The application of 03 Hybrid Technology to the Hornet, Prince's most versatile frame, makes it the most appropriate racquet for aspiring competitive players.

Prince 03 Hybrid Hornet racquets are now available at Toby's Sports, Chris Sports, Planet Sports, Sports House and other major sporting goods stores nationwide. Demo racquets are available through the Try Before You Buy program. Call 6719765 or 6716660 or visit www.princetennis.com.

Beer may not be the only reason

From page C1

weekend-only or throughout-the-week drinkers.

Number of drinks

The study found that men and women who had less than one drink per drinking day had an abdominal height that was 2.72 cm smaller than daily drinkers of four or more drinks.

Even for weekly drinkers (more than one time per week but not daily), the number of drinks mattered. Those who drank less than one drink per drinking day had an abdominal height that was 2.01 cm smaller than those who drank four or more drinks.

Take-home message

Drinkers of small amounts of alcohol consumed on a regular basis had the lowest abdominal height while those who drank intensely (three to four drinks per drinking day) but infrequently (once or twice a week) had the highest measurements.

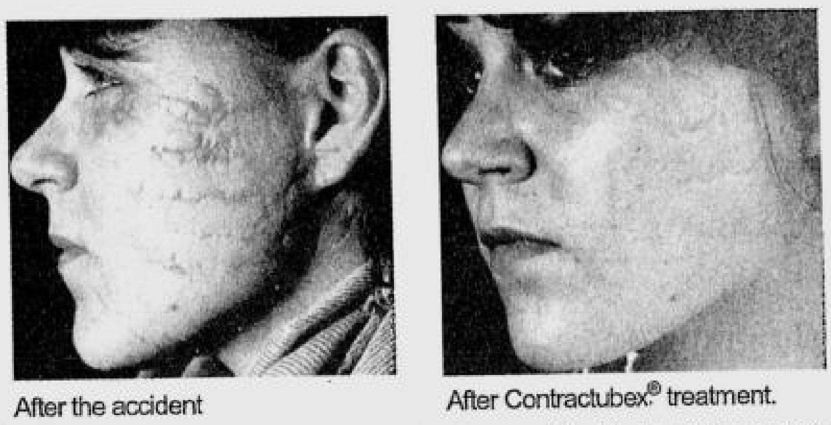
Moderate consumption of alcohol has been set at one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. Don't try to "accumulate" your drinks and drink them all in one day then rationalize you are still within the recommended low-risk drinking guidelines. This is not good for your health or your waistline.

For the full study, visit http://jn.nutrition.org:80/cgi/content/abstract/133/8/2655.

The Fitness Network Philippines (formerly AFPP) will hold a seminar on April 22. Tintin Bersola-Babao will present "Rebounding." Call 9202762 or 0917-5181202. Visit www.fitnessphilippines.org

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

DON'T LEAVE THEIR MARKS ON YOU

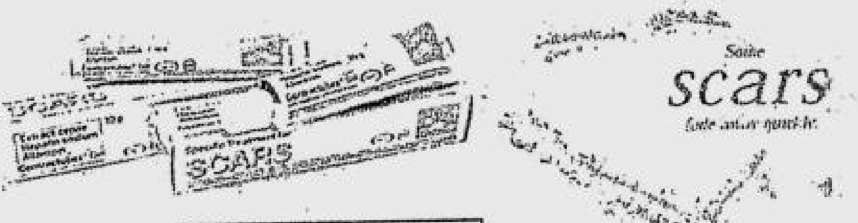


After the accident
After Contractubex® treatment.

Photo shows the scars sustained by a patient after an accidental windshield injury (left) and the scar improvement after Contractubex® treatment (right).

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN. Though we may be lucky to live and tell the tale, we often have to face the fact that some things are not going to be the same again. The SCARS for one will be a haunting reminder of the accident. BUT THAT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE CASE. We may never get over the accident trauma but we could get rid of their marks.

The clinical efficacy of Contractubex® in treating fresh and longer-standing scars and keloids has been documented in numerous studies. In the course of Contractubex® therapy, scar size, color and hardness are reduced and symptoms associated with scars, such as itching, feelings of tension and pain, are improved.



Extract cepae 10 g
Heparin sodium 5,000 IU
Allantoin 1 g

Contractubex® Gel
Specific treatment for scars

In other cases, use Contractubex.

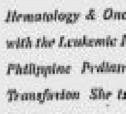
To know more about scars and Contractubex®, please send us an email at contractubex@organon.ph You may also text us at 09178523350 or call (632) 8177638. Contractubex® is available in leading drugstores nationwide.

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

What is Leukemia?

Leukemia is a cancer of the blood cells and blood forming tissues such as the bone marrow. There are several types of leukemia and these are classified by the type of cell affected and by the rate of cell growth. Leukemia is either acute or chronic. In acute leukemias, immature white blood cells, which are called blasts multiply very rapidly and therefore cannot function properly, causing the patient to develop acute symptoms and seek medical attention. In chronic leukemia, the blasts form more slowly, allowing the body to continue to produce functional cells, causing fewer symptoms for the patient. These cases are often diagnosed during a routine physical examination. The types are further divided by which type of white blood cell is affected - lymphoid cells or myeloid cells. These types are called lymphocytic leukemia and myelogenous leukemia, respectively. Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia is a disease which primarily affects children. It is the most common malignancy in children below 15 years of age, although it is also diagnosed in adults 30 years old and older. Acute myelogenous leukemia occurs more often in adults. Chronic leukemia is more common between ages 40 and 70 and is rare among young people. The specific cause of leukemia is still not known. Scientists believe that viral, genetic, environmental or immunologic factors may be involved.



This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our four-year medical service provider from Cebu City, Dr. Wilma A. Lucero. Dra. Weng is specializes in Pediatric Hematology & Oncology. She obtained her medical degree at Cebu Institute of Medicine in 1986. She took her specialty course for Pediatrics in 1995 and finished her fellowship training for Hematology & Oncology in 2002. During her fellowship training she worked with the Leukemic Indigents Fund Endowment or LIFE. She is a diplomate of the Philippine Pediatric Society, Philippine Society of Hematology & Blood Transfusion. She is also a member of the Philippine Medical Association and Cebu Medical Society. Dr. Lucero is known for her dedication and wholistic approach on patient care. MEDICard members may visit her at Perpetual Succor Hospital at Room 415, Mondays to Fridays from 3pm-6pm.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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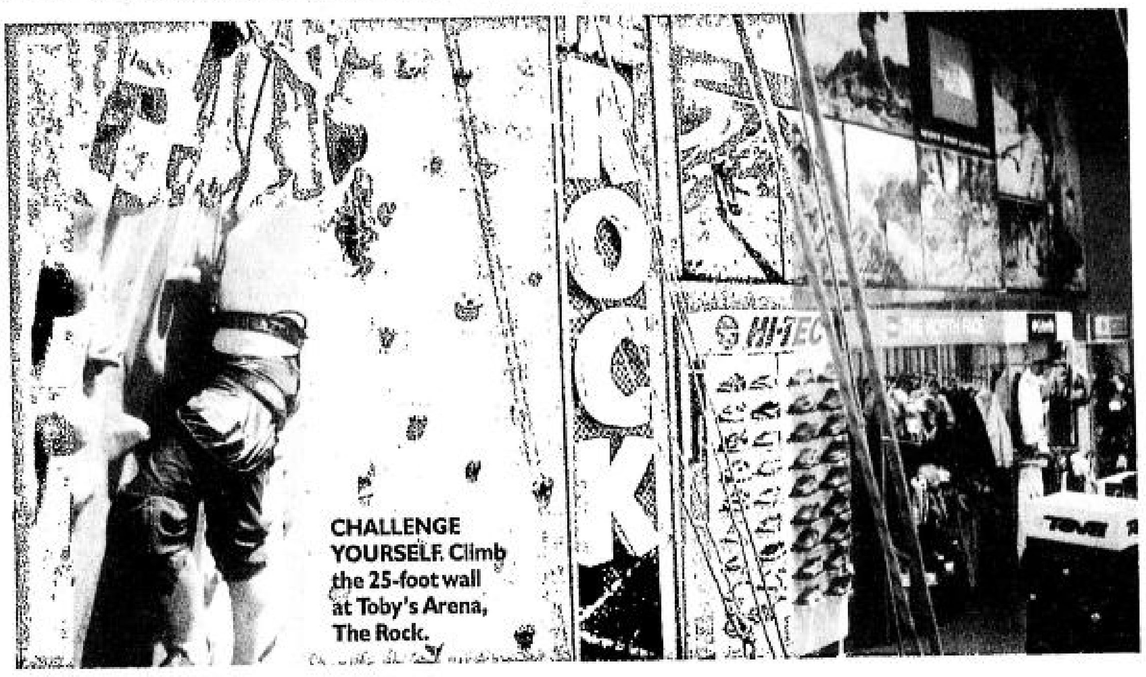


CHALLENGE YOURSELF. Climb the 25-foot wall at Toby's Arena, The Rock.

FIND the most cutting-edge sportswear and equipment in Toby's Arena.

Find your game then buy your gear

Toby's wants to make sport shopping an experience

By Anne A. Jambora

DISCOVER YOUR KIND OF sport through the country's first-ever interactive sports house.

And feel the game—whether it's badminton, basketball, boxing, inline skating, rock climbing, table tennis and more—before you buy a sport equipment.

The new 1,000-square-meter multilevel Toby's Sports Arena at Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati even has a track oval simulating the characteristics of a real sports stadium.

Patterned after specialized sports houses in the United States, Toby's took the concept further by offering a variety of interactive sports in just one space. This effectively addresses the individual choices and needs of clients, including those who are still undecided on what sport to pursue.

Tryout is free of charge. Gears, of course, will be provided by Toby's.

"The goal we always had is to make sport shopping an experience," says Roberto Claudio, founder of Toby's Sports.

And an experience it is.

First in the country

The full-size badminton court, the first of its kind in any store in the world, allows the customer to try the sport for a full 15 minutes. This time limit was set in anticipation of the traffic the popular sport would create.

Claudio said gear for badminton, a sport the middle class can finally afford to play, remained among Toby's bestsellers.

A sport predicted to be the next big thing by Claudio's son, operation manager Toby, is boxing. Test your endurance for jabs, straights, cuts and hooks before enrolling in a boxing class. Punching and speed bags are available for the curious and diehard fans of boxing.

The more courageous might want to try scaling the free-form (3D) climbing wall. Called The Rock, the climbing wall is especially designed to accommodate beginners, intermediate and advanced climbers alike.

A Speed Climb Challenge, where participants can race against time, is in the drawing board. Winners' names will be posted on the scoreboard.

Toby's Shootout will still be around. Show off your skill in two kinds of competitions—the 3-Point King and the Stop and Pop. Your scores will be compared to other players and ranked, with daily, weekly and monthly high scorers listed on the Shootout All-Stars Board.

Should you go to the store by yourself, you can still enjoy finding your sport through Toby's automatic ball-pitching machine. Experience tennis, table tennis, softball and baseball with the simple addition of a wraparound net.

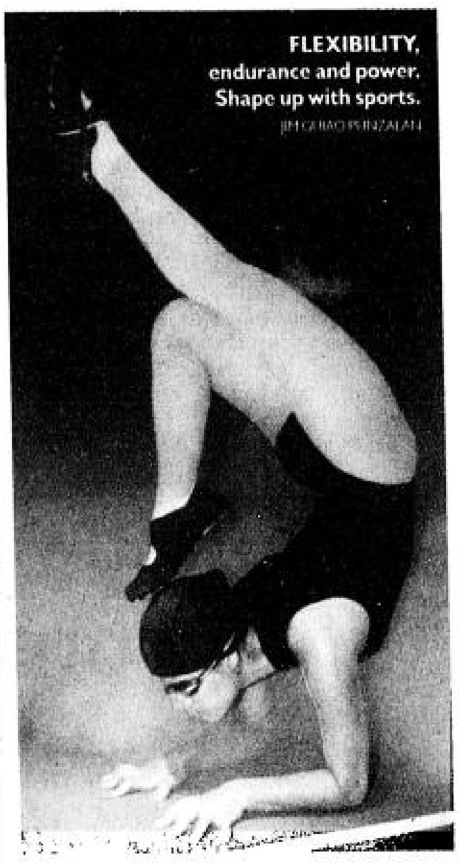
Expert help

Product specialists are on hand to answer questions and assist clients.

"Toby's has been active in creating sports awareness among Filipinos. I'd like to get every kid to play sports and make him/her feel what it is like to be inside an arena," Claudio said.

Soon, said Claudio, there would be free demos, clinics, exhibitions, seminars, launches and other sports-related activities to attract newbies and sports enthusiasts.

Experts will conduct basic courses and give pointers. Claudio said, it was, after all, part of their mission to make the country a republic of sports and fitness enthusiasts.



FLEXIBILITY, endurance and power. Shape up with sports.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Toby's Arena in Glorietta 2 is now the biggest sports house in the Philippines and one of the biggest in Asia. It carries over 60,000 different types of sports gear, equipment and accessories from more than 100 best known names in sports.

From mainstream sports to outdoor activities to extreme sports, Toby's has one of the widest selection of gears and equipment.

Founded in 1979, Toby's Sports now has 37 branches nationwide, six of them Toby's Arena superstores. The next Arena will soon open at the SM Mall of Asia. Plans to introduce new and alternative sports are also in the works.

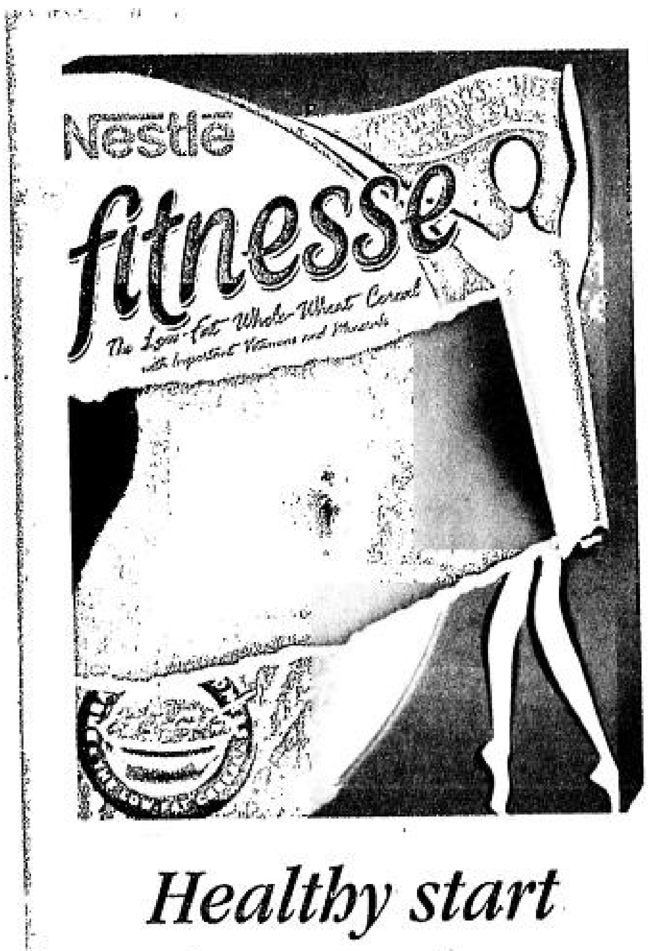
E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph.

BOXING is predicted to be the next big thing in Philippine sport.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

KENNEVIC Asuncion tries the full-sized badminton court.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN


Nestle
fitnesse
The Low-Fat Whole-Wheat Cereal
with Important Vitamins and Minerals

Healthy start to morning

GET FIT AND SLIM with cereals.

You may not know but cereal for breakfast can get you the slender body you may have been wishing for for a long time.

Start your day on a healthier note with the new Nestlé Fitnesse.

Made from whole wheat, Nestlé Fitnesse is high in essential nutrients like calcium and folic acid. It has zero cholesterol and is low in fat. Consisting of whole wheat grains, it also provides much-needed fiber.

At P99 per 180-g pack, Nestlé Fitnesse is not just light in calories, but light on the pocket, too.

A bowl of cereals a day can help keep the pounds away to maintain that slim silhouette.

Nestlé Fitnesse Breakfast Cereal is available in all leading groceries and supermarkets nationwide.

Innovation marks Freedom Camp

LEVI'S ENGINEERED JEANS LIVED UP TO its name during the recent two-day Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp at the Market! Market! Activity Center.

The event featured innovative activities like individual and group freestyle dance, freestyle basketball, freestyle football, free climbing and zipping. Participants were aged 15-25.

Ronnie Celestial, Levi's brand leader, said the jeans provided the kind of freedom that young people wanted.

Individual winners were: freestyle basketball—Jessie Boy Latonero, Miguel Aragon, Eryll San Jose; freestyle football—Matthew Virtucio, Sung Hag Ahn, Roxy Dorlas; and freestyle dance—Laurence Neri, Poy Magallanes, Joanne Samson.

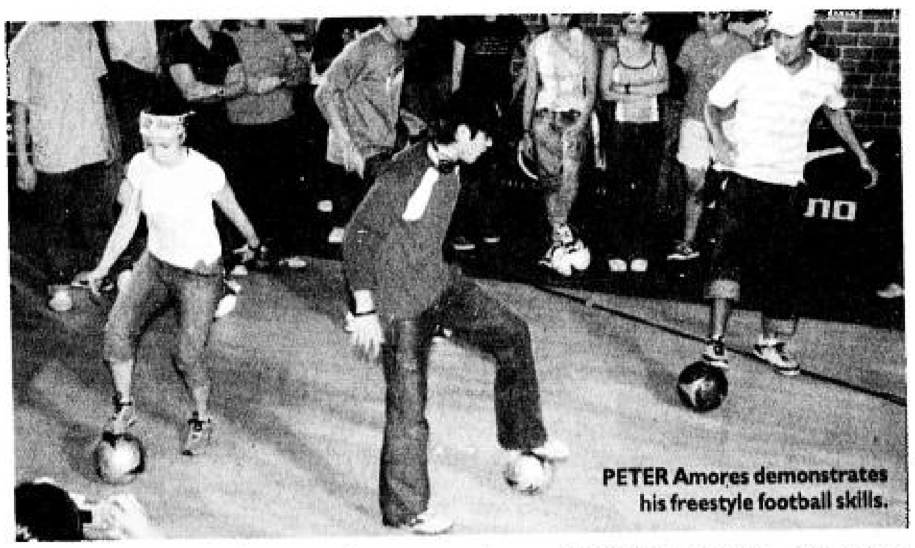
In the group competition, Emilio Aguinaldo College's moves and tricks earned them the top prize.

Prizes for the top three individual winners were P20,000, P10,000 and P5,000. The first-prize winner in each of the three events also received Levi's Engineered Jeans products, eyewear and watch.

First prize in the Group Dance competition was P100,000. Second and third prize winners got P50,000 and P20,000, respectively. Additional prizes were provided by sponsors Mizuno, And1 and Snickers Chocolate bars.

The camp gave beginner's modules in all five activities and let participants try any activity they liked. Assisting the campers were experts Kenneth "Kenjohns" Serrano, freestyle dance; Ferdinand "Dedick" Manansala, freestyle basketball; Peter Amores, freestyle football; Miguel Lopez for free climbing; and Lorraine Lapuz and Cat Juan for zipping.

Highlights of the event hosted by Rovilson Fernandez and Faith Amigo included a jolting exhibition by the camp's activity specialists. Participants got free Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp shirts and gift packs. Those who wore their best Levi's gear also won prizes.

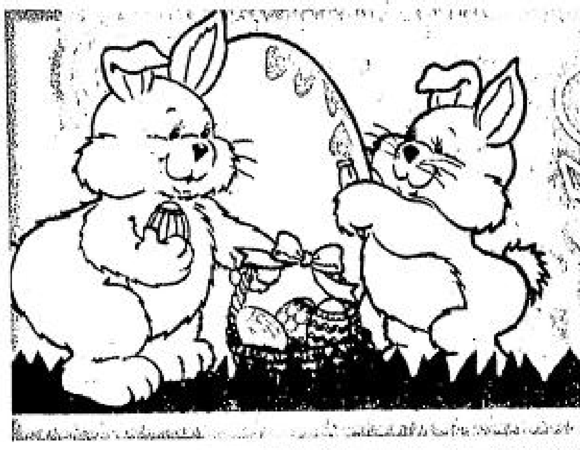


PETER Amores demonstrates his freestyle football skills.

LEVI'S consumer marketing manager Michelle Borromeo and Levi's brand leader Ronnie Celestial

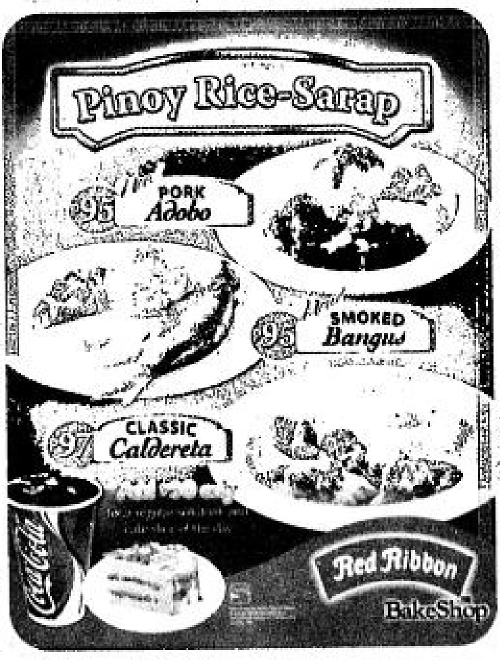
JINNO Rufino, Chinggay Andrada and Monch Martelino

LEVI'S team after the Freedom Camp



SPEND EASTER at SM

SUPERMALLS

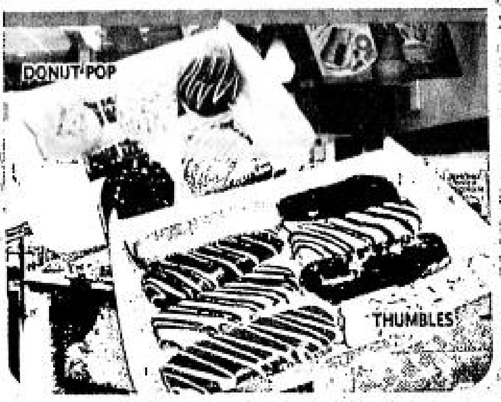

Pinoy Rice-Sarap
95 PORK Adobo
95 SMOKED Bangus
97 CLASSIC Caldereta
Red Ribbon BakeShop

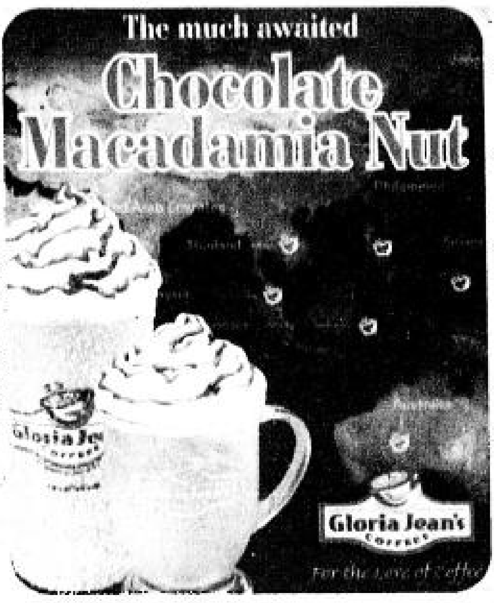
ALMON MARINA

Sandwich Bar & DELI

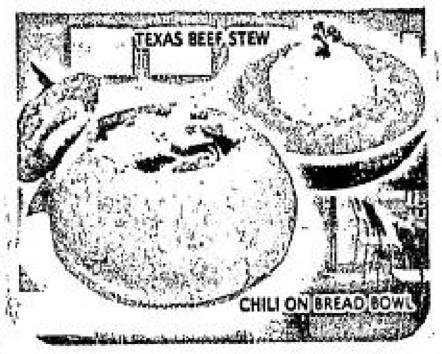
BACALAO ALA VIZCAINA
HOT CRAB SANDWICH

Mister Donut

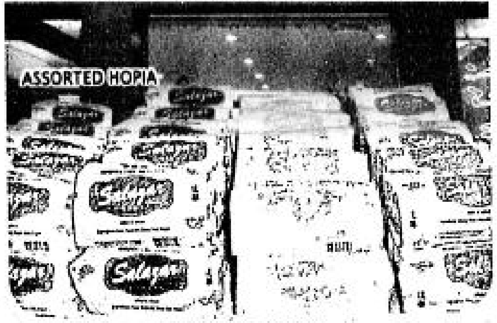

DONUT POP
THUMBLES


The much awaited
Chocolate Macadamia Nut
Gloria Jean's COFFEES
For the Love of Coffee

The SOUP KITCHEN


TEXAS BEEF STEW
CHILI ON BREAD BOWL

Salazar BAKERY


ASSORTED HOPIA

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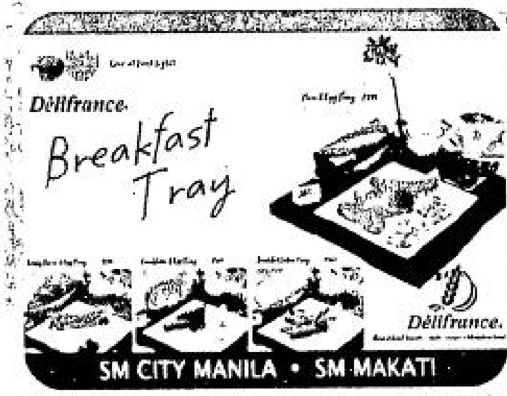
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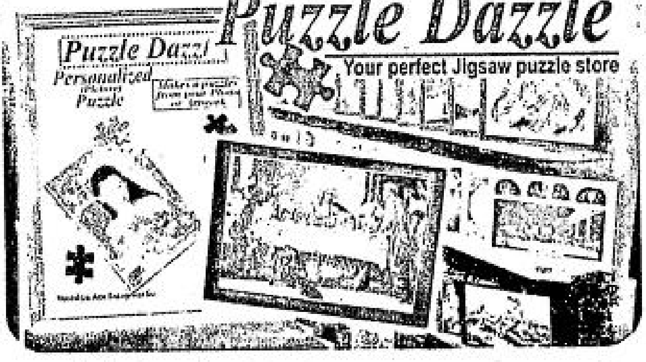
Puzzle Dazzle
Personalized Puzzle

GLICO'S

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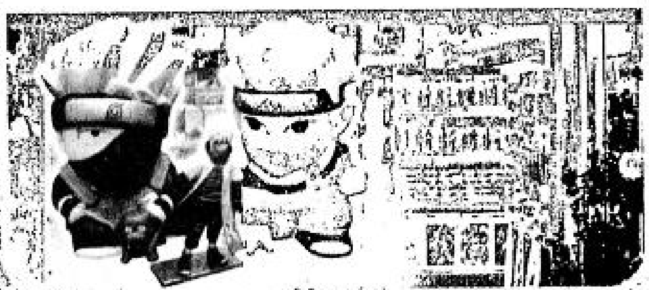
COMIC ALLEY



GAMES & GADGETS

BINGO CAFÉ 1st Level, SM FAIRVIEW	**Bingo Station** 3rd Level, SM BACOOR	**BINGO PLACE** 4th Level, SM MANILA	**BINGO! SM Bonanza** 3rd Level, SM MEGAMALL 2nd Level, SM CITY NORTH 3rd Level, SM SOUTHMALL
Bingo Plaza 1st Level, SM STA MESA	**Bingo EXTRAVAGANZA** 3rd Level, SM SUCAT	**Pampanga Bingo** 3rd Level, SM PAMPANGA	

MAKI-SAYA'T MAKILARO!
MILYUN MILYONG
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SM SUPERMALLS

Hop-py Easter Fair

APRIL 16, 2006

I. Hop-py Easter Fair - April 16, 2006 (Sunday) 11AM - 4 PM

Step 1. Kids ages 3 to 9 years old may join.
Step 2. Proceed to the registration desk and register your name.
Step 3. Choose three (3) from any of the five (5) activities you want to avail.
Step 4. Get your activities' corresponding stub.
Step 5. Proceed to the designated booth of the activity of your choice, and have fun!

BOOTH 1. EGG PAINTING ACTIVITY*

- Available to the first 150 participants
- Experience the fun of art and colors by painting ceramic eggs
- Materials are available at the booth - apron, watercolor, brush, ceramic egg
- 20 kids to work per batch
- First come, first served basis

BOOTH 2. HOP-PY MOMENTS*

- Available to the first 400 participants
- Kids can choose one (1) from the two (2) Easter-inspired designs
- Simply take the place of the bunny's head and pose for a photo shot.
- One (1) shot per child only.
- Only those with personal cameras may have more than one (1) shot.

BOOTH 3. CARICATURE CORNER*

- Kids simply sit down with our caricaturist
- Kids pose and project their comic and funny side
- Our caricaturist will take care of the artwork
- Kids who avail of this activity can get to bring home a fun portrait of themselves.

BOOTH 4. EGGSTER'S CHOICE - CHOCOLATE COUNTER*

- Simply guess the number of mini chocolate eggs inside the jar
- On a piece of paper, write the kid's name, and contact number
- Drop your entry inside boxes which indicates the number of mini chocolate eggs
- Five (5) winners will be drawn
- Each winner will get to bring home a box of mini chocolate eggs equivalent to the number of mini chocolate eggs inside the jar.

BOOTH 5. BALLOON TWISTING ACTIVITY*

- Request for your favorite animal to be formed through twisting balloons
- Balloon twister artist will have it formed by twisting balloons in seconds
- Get to bring home the twisted balloon as a souvenir

II. COSTUME CONTEST*

- Kids ages 3 to 8 years old can join the contest
- Proceed to the registration desk to qualify
- Registration is open from 11 AM to 4 PM only
- Kids should come in their Easter Bunny costumes
- Judging is scheduled at 4 PM and shall be based on the following criteria:

Creativity	- 50%
Projection	- 35%
Audience impact	- 15%
TOTAL	100%

III. MINI SHOW* - 4:30 PM

- Sit back, relax and enjoy a fun-filled show for the kids to watch
- Join our games and receive special gifts from Jollibee

IV. AWARDING OF WINNERS

- 5 Winners of Eggster's Choice each to receive a jar of mini egg chocolates.
- 10 Winners for Easter Bunny Costume Contest consisting of five (5) girls and five (5) boys, will each receive P 2,000.00 worth of Gift Certificates from SM Supermalls.

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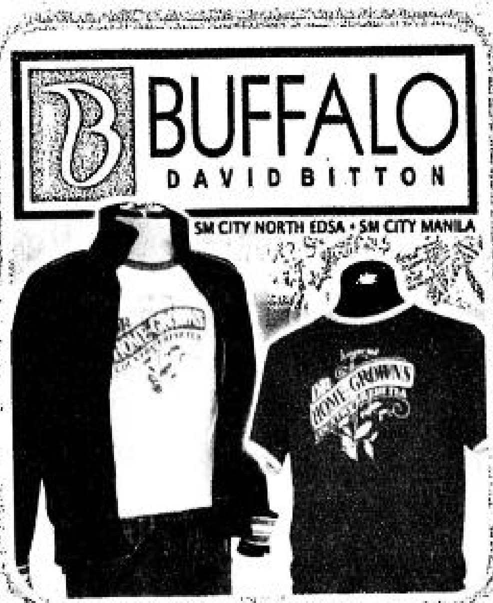
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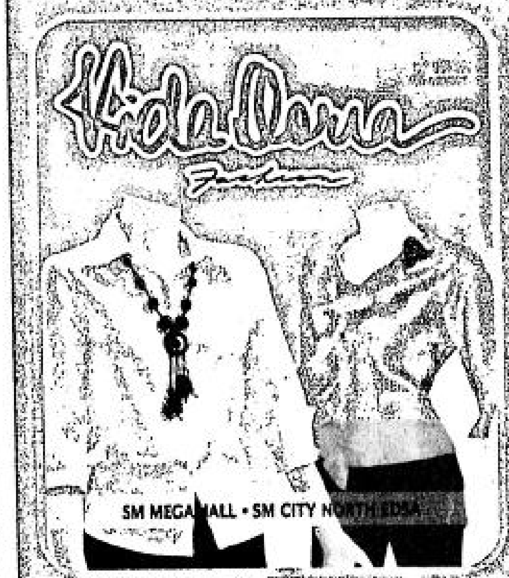
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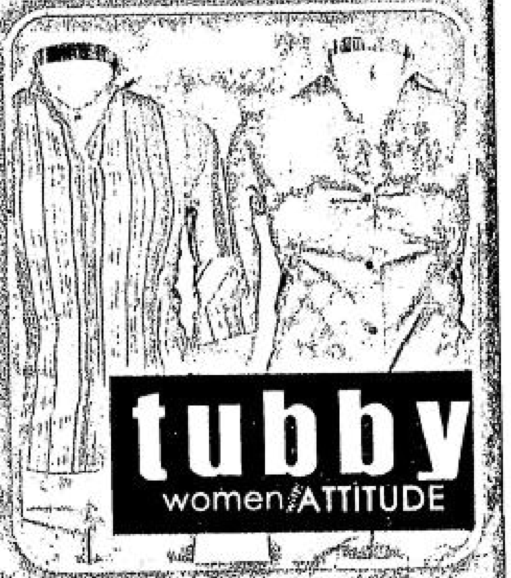
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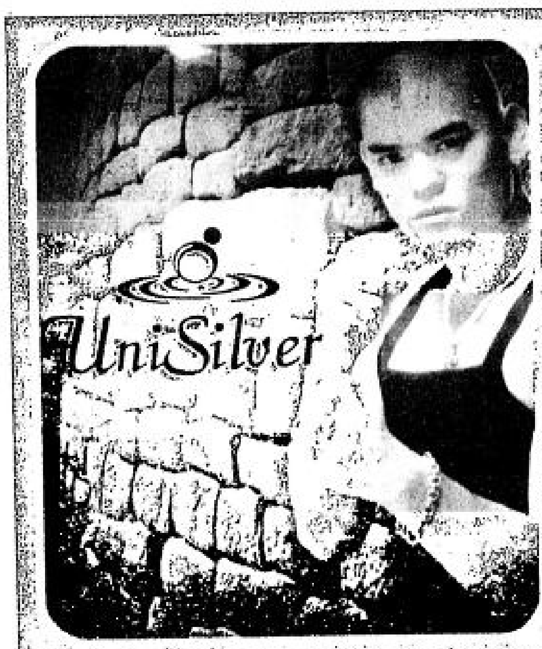

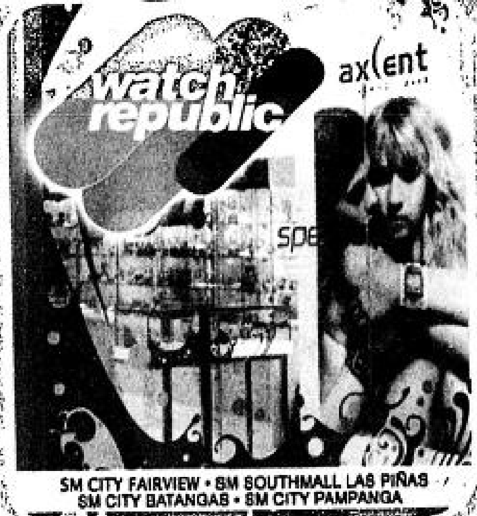
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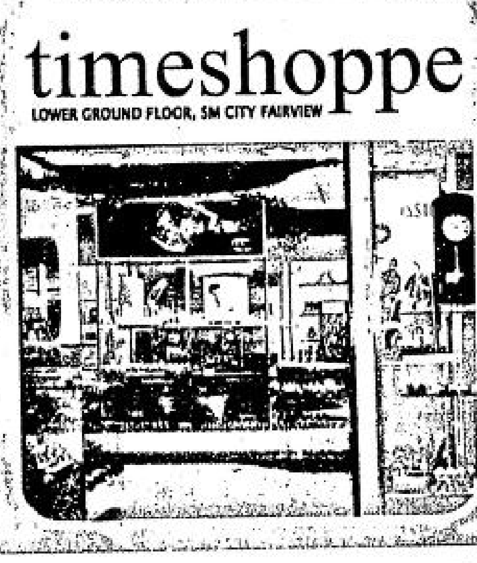
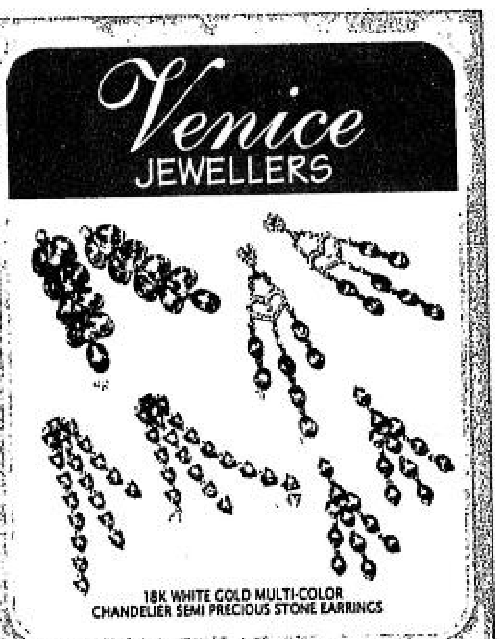

timeshoppe
LOWER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY FAIRVIEW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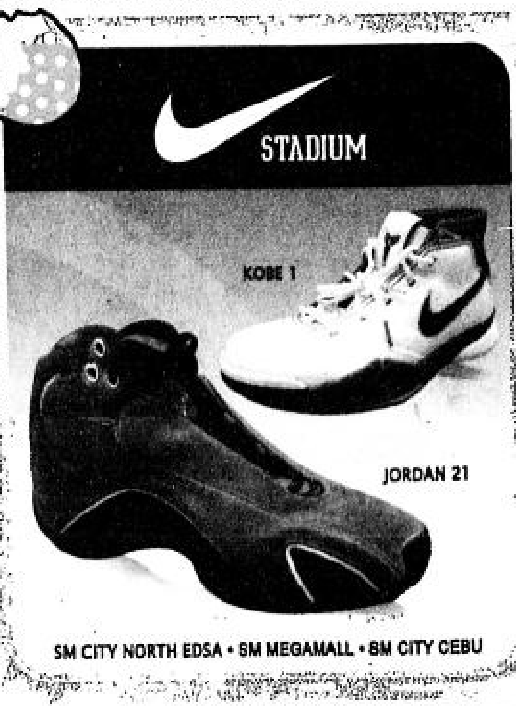
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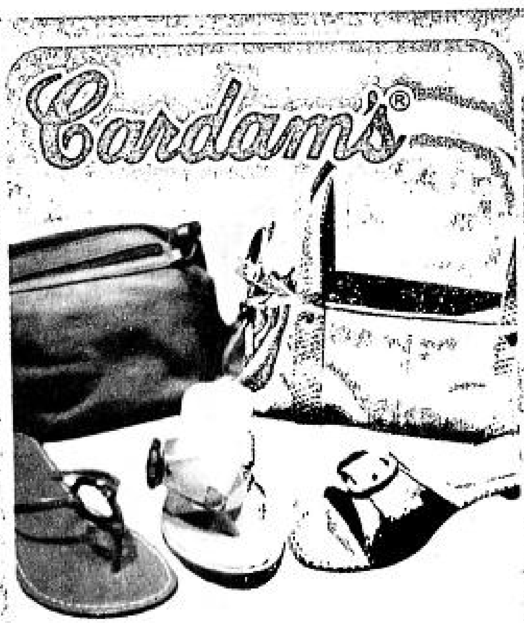

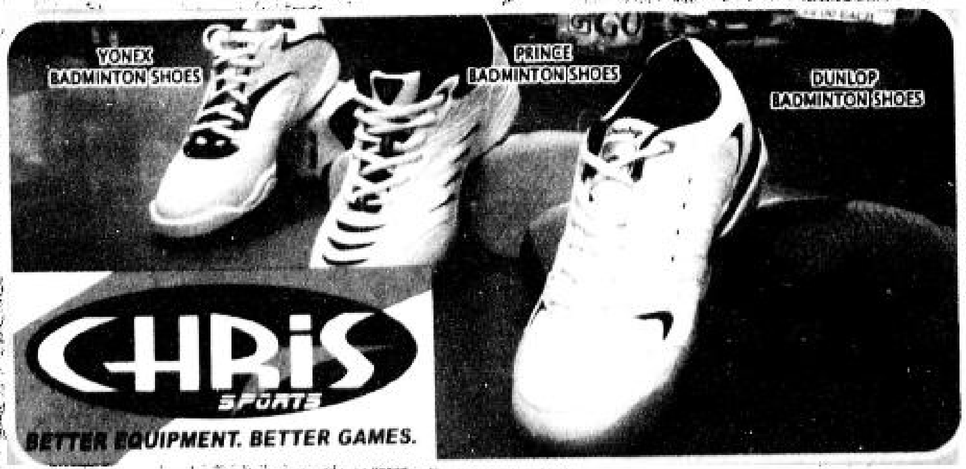
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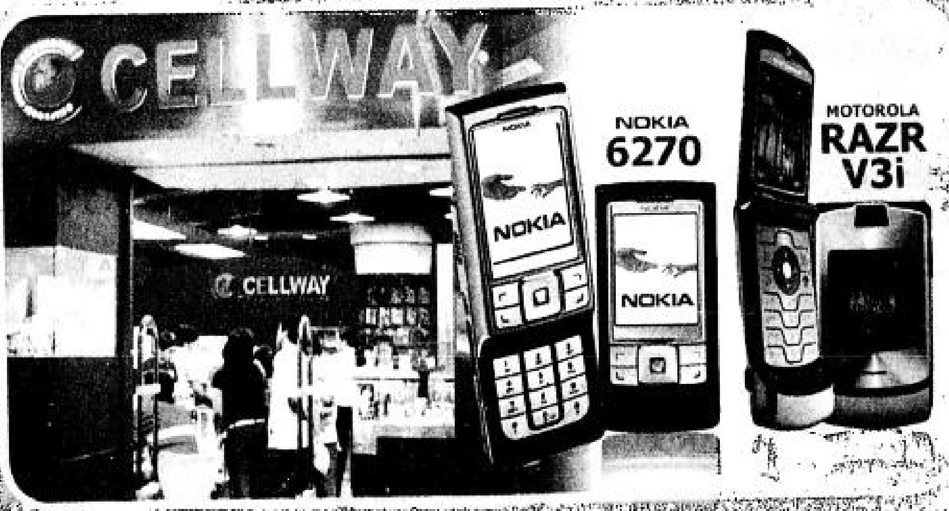
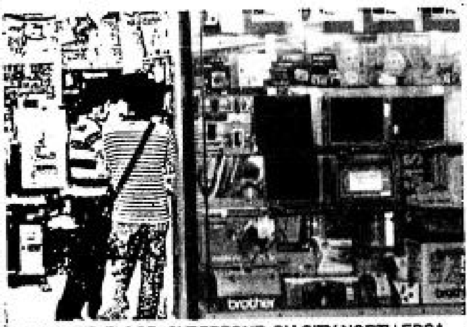


FUTURE LINK



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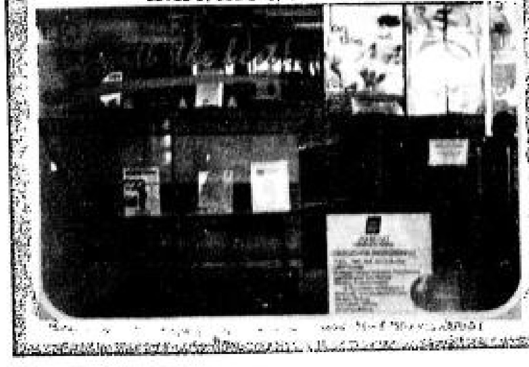

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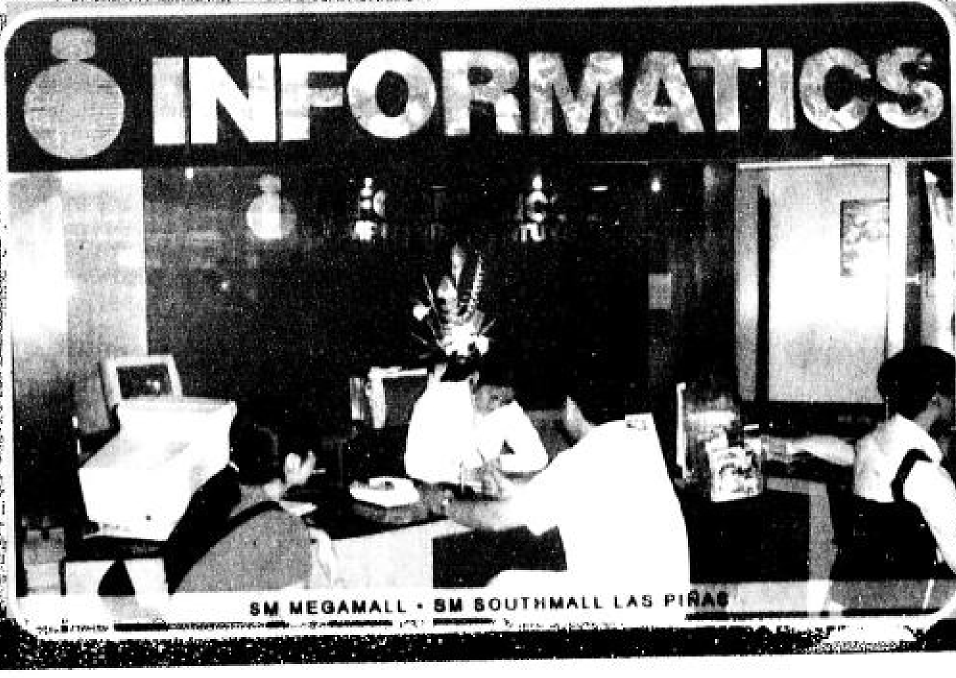

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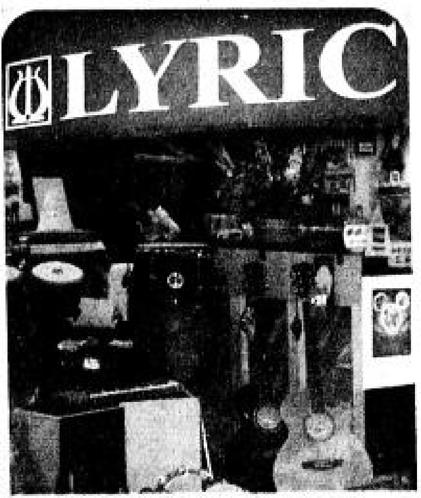

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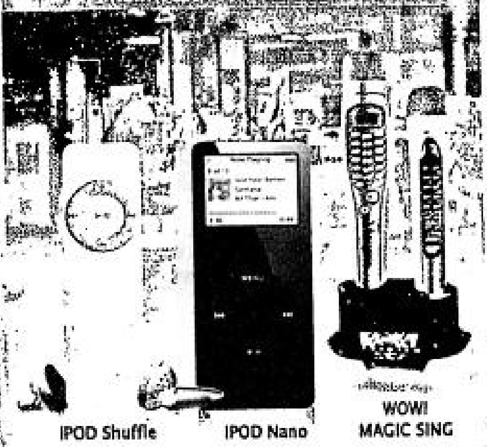
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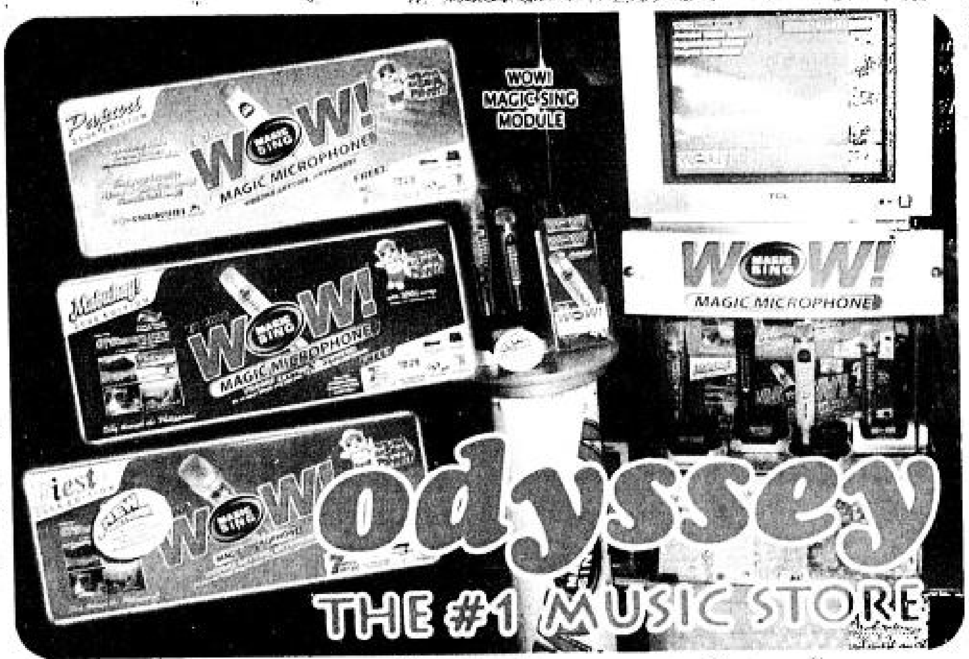
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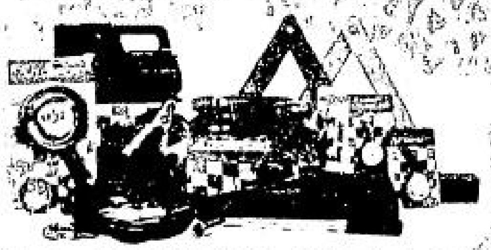

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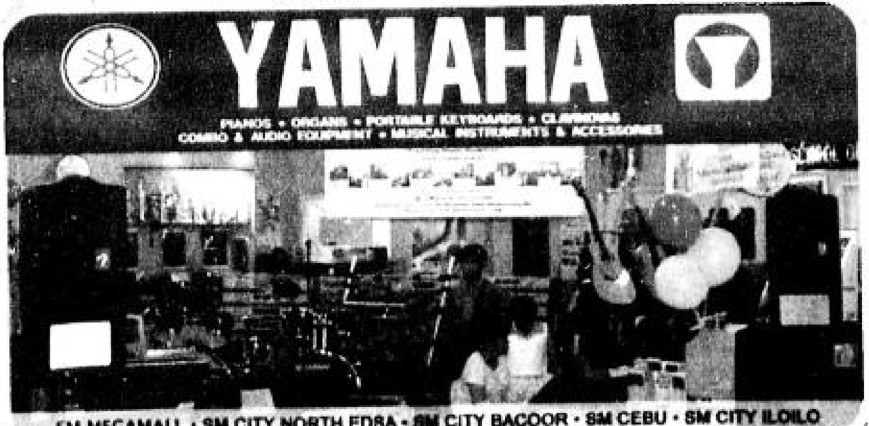
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■ NEWS/A2

More religious groups support CBCP, lash out at Cha-cha

■ ACROSS/A15

DAR gives in to demand of Luisita workers to help validate beneficiaries

■ WORLD/A19

PM Berlusconi's allies dispute results of Italian election

■ METRO/A18

No MRT operations Thursday to Saturday; LRT Thursday to Sunday

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, April 12, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 125 P18 website: www.inq7.net

22 officials join Gloria in Baguio retreat; 9 abroad

MAGASTOS SA ABROAD!

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI N. Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—TWENTY-two government officials are joining President Macapagal-Arroyo in her two-day Holy Week retreat here, but nine others

22 OFFICIALS/ A6

President names Davide RP ambassador to the UN

By Philip C. Tubeza

FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE HILARIO DAVIDE JR. has a new job: Philippine ambassador to the United Nations.

In a March 24 letter to the Commission on Appointments, President Macapagal-Arroyo informed the CA chair, Senate President Franklin Drilon, about Davide's nomination.

PRESIDENT/ A6

UR
UNDERGROUND RIVER

SPLENDOR IN THE SUN Nature trippers will thrill to the 8.5-km Princess St. Paul Underground River Cave in Sabang near Bambua Nature Park Resort in Palawan. The magical river caves, lush vegetation and pristine waters make the island a dream destination for survivors of the urban jungle in search of summering.

RYAN LIM

Palace giveth, taketh

Approved list of National Artist awardees withdrawn due to lobbying

FERNANDO POE JR.

BEN CABRERA

BIENVENIDO LUMBERA

RAMON OBUSAN

ILDEFONSO SANTOS

RAMON VALERA

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FERNANDO POE JR., "DA KING" TO MILLIONS OF MOVIE fans, is now a National Artist.

Or is he?

Just hours after it released an official list of the names of six distinguished Filipino artists—led by the late actor-director and presidential candidate Poe—who will be conferred the rank and title of Order of National Artist, Malacañang strangely withdrew the announcement.

"It just means that the process has not been formally completed. Mr. Poe remains a very strong contender," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye explained as Palace executives scrambled late last night to pull out the memo from public release claiming that the list was not yet final and the selection process was still going on.

But Ambeth Ocampo, chair of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) board of commissioners, said he transmitted the list of recommended awardees to the Palace by the NCCA and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) three weeks ago.

"The process is finished. Six names have been recommended and Malacañang has confirmed them," said Ocampo, who added that he had not been informed of the Palace withdrawal of the announcement.

Malacañang earlier yesterday announced that Poe and five other people were being honored for their outstanding contributions to arts and letters—Bienvenido L. Lumbera (literature), Ramon A. Obusan (dance), Benedicto Cabrera (visual arts), Ildefonso P. Santos, Jr. (architecture) and the late Ramon Valera (fashion design).

It said the conferment ceremonies were to be held on June 9 in Malacañang with the CCP holding a tribute in the evening at its main theater.

Sought for clarification on Poe's award, Bunye said in a text message: "The selec-

PALACE/ A6

Military probes Lim, Querubin in 'secret'

By Dona Pazzibugan

EVEN AS IT IS FINALLY BEING forced by public pressure to release the results of an internal investigation into alleged military involvement in election cheating, the Armed Forces leadership now appears to be keeping under wraps its probe of two top military officers suspected of involvement in a failed coup attempt in February.

Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, former chief of the Scout Ranger Regiment, and Col. Ariel Querubin, former Marine brigade commander, were on Monday and yesterday brought before an inquiry body headed by Inspector General Rear Admiral Rufino Lopez to see if they could be charged before a court-martial.

Yesterday, Col. Tristan Kison, the chief of the AFP public information office, said there was an order to keep the proceedings "under wraps" because the inves-

MILITARY/ A4

Ombudsman urged: Order GMA to face plunder raps

By Philip C. Tubeza
and Nelson F. Flores

LAWYER FRANCISCO CHAVEZ yesterday asked the Office of the Ombudsman to compel President Macapagal-Arroyo and several others to formally answer the plunder charges he filed against them in connection with the P728-million fertilizer fund scam.

Chavez said the Ombudsman should now act on the plunder case because both the Senate and the Commission on Audit had finished their investigations and discovered irregularities in the disbursement of the fertilizer funds for the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) rice program in 2004.

The fund, originally meant for the purchase of farm inputs, was

OMBUDSMAN/ A4

'Unless impeached, we can't be replaced'

By Jerome Aning
and Christine O. Avendaño

ANY CALL FOR A REVAMP OF the Commission on Elections is futile because its chair and commissioners are beyond the reach of the President.

That, in effect, was the reaction of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and Malacañang to an INQUIRER story that said retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. had recommended six nominees for poll commissioners as part of reforms to restore the credibility of the poll body.

Davide's recommendations for reforms sparked calls for "radical surgery" on the constitutionally independent body that has been scarred by allegations of corruption and involvement in poll shenanigans.

"Unless we are impeached, we can't be replaced," Abalos told reporters.

UNLESS/ A13

TV special plants Judas kiss on Catholic Church

By Lito B. Zulueta

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS not hidden from Christians the existence of the Gospel of Judas and other Gnostic writings. But scholars and certain sectors of the media have tended to use the controversial writings to forward their own agendas and discredit the Church, a Catholic biblical scholar has warned.

"There may be malice involved," said Spanish Dominican Fr. Angel Aparicio of the University of Santo Tomas. "They may be scholars, but they have their own agendas. I am so surprised the National Geographic is promoting this (Gospel of Judas)."

Aparicio was referring to the National Geographic special aired on Palm Sunday that reported on the discovery of the so-called Gospel of Judas, an archeological find that non-Catholic biblical scholars such as Elaine Pagels, who was interviewed in the special, said should confirm the attempts of the early Church fathers to marginalize other Christian groups in a bid to establish the institutional Church.

"Elaine Pagels is a genuine

TV SPECIAL/ A13

RYAN LIM

PUBLIC RELATIONS OSCARS. Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Inquirer president/CEO, receives the Grand Anvil Award from Heherson Alvarez.

Inquirer bags Grand Anvil Award

By Joel V. Nigos

ADDING TO THE NUMEROUS awards and citations already bestowed on the INQUIRER, PDI recently bagged the Grand Anvil Award and the Anvil Award of Excellence for PR Programs given by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) at the 41st Anvil Awards at the Manila Hotel.

Called the "Oscars" of public

INQUIRER/ A6

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/04/12/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

More religious lash out at Cha-cha

By Christian V. Esguerra

TAKING THEIR CUE FROM THE BISHOPS, KEY members of the Association of Major Religious Superiors and other sectarian organizations yesterday denounced the drive to amend the Constitution, saying it was desecrating the real essence of a people's initiative to shield "this evil President" from the backlash of her alleged sins.

A statement issued yesterday by Sinag, an ecumenical movement comprising various religious groups, was even more scathing than that issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) which had voiced "alarm" that the Cha-cha initiative was "dangerously unclear and open to manipulation by groups with self-serving interests."

"It mocks, exploits and feeds on the poverty and simplicity of the people for her self-serving goals," the Sinag statement said, referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo. The statement was prepared by Fr. Ben Moraleda, Sinag's chief convenor.

"Widespread and credible reports of how (her) unconscionable operators continue to bribe the starving poor with government funds, to fool the unschooled and the unlettered with legal garbage, and even to seduce conscientious local officials and some church leaders with expensive gifts, only show how low (she) is capable of stooping just to be able to stay in Malacañang."

Sinag includes the Kaalagad Katipunang Kristiyano, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, Urban Missionaries of the Philippines, and the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Association of Major Religious Superiors or AMRSP.

Grateful to CBCP

The groups expressed gratitude to the CBCP for its "courageous and timely exercise of the prophetic role of the Church."

"We pray that our church leaders, as well as our fellow Christians and believers, who still hold their baptismal, priestly and prophetic vocations sacred and not for sale, will remain close and attentive to the people, so that the cry of Christ in the poor, and not the deceptions of ambitious and evil leaders, will always be the guiding principle and motivation of their ministry," their statement said.

Meanwhile, in Baguio City, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday the administration had taken notice of the apprehensions voiced by the bishops and some businessmen but would continue to push for Charter change in an appropriate manner.

Ermita said the Palace would heed the observations of the bishops because they were a "significant group," being leaders of the Church who know the "pulse of the people."

Original sin

Sinag said it was clear that the latest push for a unicameral parliamentary system of government through a people's initiative was "designed to provide this evil president with a cover-up for her original sin—the Hello Garci comedy."

"(It is) part of (Ms Arroyo's) evil scheme to distract and derail the people from the real issue: The massive electoral fraud that spawned her illegitimate government," the group said.

Sinag said the initiative could not be considered detached from the sequence of events that started and aggravated the current political crisis.

Initial response

It noted that Ms Arroyo initially responded to questions over the legitimacy of her victory in the 2004 election with "sulky and impenitent silence" and later apologized for what she claimed was a "lapse in judgment" for phoning an election official and discussing her margin of victory while the vote canvass was ongoing.

Then she went on appealing against excessive politicking, saying it was "time to move on," the group said.

Then came Executive Order 464, the calibrated preemptive response policy against anti-Arroyo protests, and Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 and, now, her "fictitious" people's initiative, it said.

"The majority of the Filipino people are not about to be hoodwinked by any and all of (her) antics," it said.

"Even as more proof of last year's massive electoral fraud are being dug up, the majority of this country's population is more and more convinced that (she) is an illegitimate president, and her weak and opportunistic sycophants, an impostor government. And fewer and fewer self-respecting citizens of this proud and sovereign nation are now willing to accept and follow her leadership."

Asked if the Palace would back down in its push for Charter change in light of the CBCP statement, Ermita replied: "I wouldn't say that. We will just take, I suppose, what is needed to achieve the objective, and the objective is for Charter change."

On the fears of the Makati Business Club that the hasty shift in the form of government would would hurt the economy, Ermita said: "I believe in what they say, haste makes waste." *With Christine O. Avendaño*

Leftists liken Army captain in gov't video to Judas

By Blanche S. Rivera
and Donna Z. Pazzibugan

LEFTISTS YESTERDAY LIKENED Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala, a leader of the 2003 failed Oakwood mutiny, to Judas Iscariot for claiming in a government-produced video that the Left and the Right had formed an alliance to topple President Macapagal-Arroyo after the attempted coup by junior officers fizzled out.

"It seems that in line with the Lenten season, Gambala is playing the Judas to his former colleagues in the Magdalo," Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas leader Willy Marbella said in a statement.

The militant group, whose leaders were among those accused by the government of plotting with Magdalo leaders, said Gambala must have received his "30 pieces of silver," the amount for which the Bible says Judas betrayed Jesus Christ to Roman soldiers.

"The question is: How much did Malacañang pay him to turn his back on his former comrades? What is his deal with Gloria? For him to corroborate Malacañang's lies, his price would certainly be more than 30 pieces of silver," Marbella said.

Meetings in restaurants

Appearing in a 15-minute video titled "Sabwatan sa Kataksilan" (Alliance in Treachery) released by Malacañang last Monday, Gambala claimed the Magdalo leaders had met with leaders of the Left in various restaurants since December 2003.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan questioned the timing of the video, saying the claim that the May 1 Labor Day rallies would be used for rebel action against the government, was an excuse for more repression.

"Not only does it aim to rehash the basis for Proclamation 1017 last February, it also appears to be a preemptive move against the traditional May 1 protests," Bayan secretary general Renato M. Reyes Jr. said in a statement.

He said the Right-Left conspiracy was being rehashed to justify moves against the traditional May 1 rallies, including the cancellation or refusal to issue rally permits.

"Is there going to be 1017 all over again on May 1? Will there be a ban on rallies? Will there be arrest of leaders? Why release the video now before Labor Day?" Reyes asked.

Magdalo denial

Meanwhile, leaders of the detained Magdalo group denied Gambala's allegations, and their lawyer said they could not have met with any Leftist or communist leaders because they were in jail since the Oakwood mutiny ended.

"We say this categorically: There has never been and there will never be an alliance between us and the CPP-NPA [Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army]," said Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, in a statement on behalf of the Magdalo group.

"We went to Oakwood to fight for the rights of the soldiers. It is impossible and unthinkable that we'll join the enemies of the very soldiers we're fighting for," Trillanes said.

Trillanes said Gambala was acting out of desperation. "It's up to the people if they want to believe someone who is so desperate to get out of prison."

Legislators also criticized Gambala and the video.

"It is unfortunate that a once-principled officer like him would succumb to the pressure of a few of his superiors who themselves have no moral ascendancy and allow himself to be used as a witting propaganda tool of Malacañang," Sen. Panfilo Lacson said.

Powers of administration

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said he was not discounting the possibility that Gambala had been influenced by the "remunerative powers" of the administration.

Both Lacson and Biazon said they did not believe there was truly such an alliance.

Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez, who had served as Ms Arroyo's national security adviser, said he felt sorry for Gambala.

"A detained person making statements favorable to his captors has no credibility. That is normally the hell that awaits someone who turns against his comrades ... The Gambala name will, unfortunately for him, be long associated with Kataksilan," Golez said.

Malacañang once more defended the video and other efforts to expose the alleged Left-Right conspiracy.

"Our people have the right to know about these plots intended to undermine and destroy our democratic system, said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the video was put together to show that the conspiracy really existed. *With Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac*

Teachers may join protests

TEACHERS MAY join actions protesting Charter change, but only on their own time, according to the Department of Education.

Moreover, DepEd Officer-in-Charge Fe Hidalgo said, teachers must not use the resources of their office in the protests.

Hidalgo, herself a former classroom teacher, said teachers had the right "to decide for themselves" what stand to take on issues critical to their interests.

"We cannot prohibit anybody from doing what they want, to make decisions in relation to the law, in relation to directions we want to take. They are adults. More so if they are educators, they should know what to decide," Hidalgo said.

Accordingly, Hidalgo also gave teachers the green light to get involved in the signature campaign for or against Charter change.

"I trust the teachers. They know what to do, they know what to decide on," Hidalgo said.

DepEd Assistant Secretary Camilo Montesa said the department would not attempt to influence teachers on what stand to take on political issues. *Alcuin Papa*

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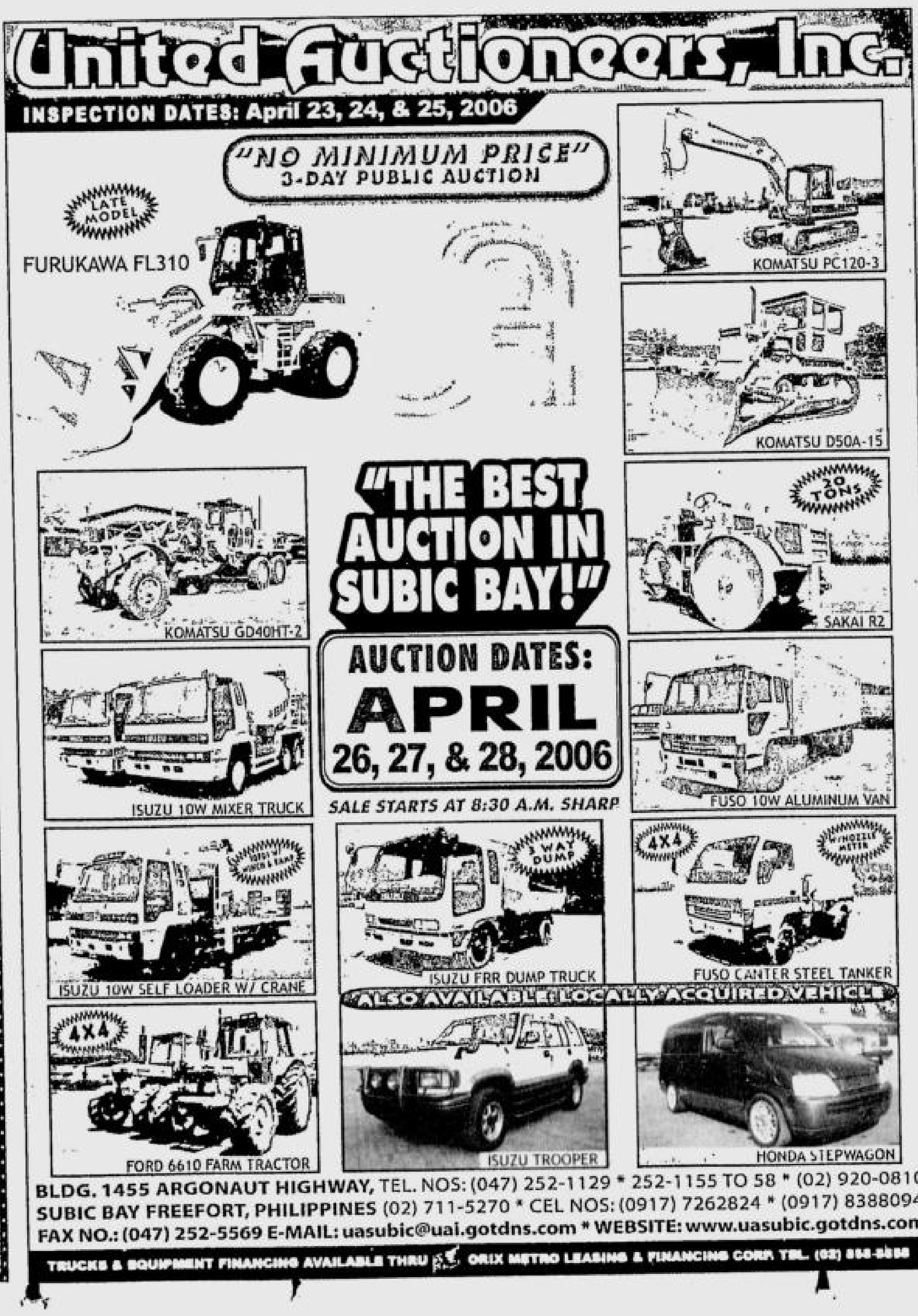
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Is Jocjoc Bolante back in country?

By Philip C. Tubeza

IS FORMER AGRICULTURE UNdersecretary Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante back for Easter?

The office of Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. yesterday asked the Bureau of Immigration to look into reports that the alleged architect of the P728-million fertilizer fund scam had slipped back into the country over the weekend.

Lawyer Angelo Buenviaje Jr., Magsaysay's chief of staff, wrote Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez to verify the information that Bolante arrived in the country before dawn on Sunday.

The Senate issued an arrest warrant for Bolante in December after he refused to attend the investigation of the Senate agriculture committee, which Magsaysay heads, on the fertilizer fund scam.

The fund was believed to have been distributed to allies of the administration to ensure President Macapagal-Arroyo's victory in the May 2004 presidential election.

"We write to confirm the veracity of the information disclosed to us that (Bolante) arrived in the country (on Sunday) at four o'clock in the morning," Buenviaje told Fernandez.

Magsaysay is on a medical trip in the United States.

Sighted in Alabang?

Reports that Bolante had returned started to spread after Sen. Sergio Osmeña III said on Sunday that a neighbor of Bolante's in Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City had seen him.

However, nobody was able to confirm that Bolante had returned to the country from the United States.

Deputy House Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano said he had received information that Bolante had returned home.

"His village mates saw him today at his house in Ayala Alabang," Cayetano told the INQUIRER.

Cayetano said that if the report was true, "those personally associated with the President are flaunting the law."

Cayetano, quoting Bolante's neighbors, said Bolante's house at 360 Maria Cristina St. in Ayala Alabang was protected by high walls.

He said the neighbors claimed to have seen Bolante entering the gate of his house on Monday.

Senate arrest order

The Senate arrest order against Bolante still stands and could be "carried out any time," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said.

"But if it is true, then probably if we can get the committee to act on it so that he can be located and perhaps prevented from leaving to face the committee of Jun Magsaysay," Pimentel said.

"That would be good so that we can put a closure to this investigation, especially relative to the involvement of Bolante who is prominently mentioned in the investigation report," he said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

CHURCHES glow with the devotions of the faithful during Holy Week, such as at the Shrine of the Mother of Perpetual Help in Baclaran.
REM ZAMORA

Ombudsman urged: Order GMA to face . . .

From page A1

believed to have been diverted and distributed as largesse to allies of the administration to ensure Ms Arroyo's victory in the May 2004 presidential election.

Chavez bewailed the Ombudsman's inaction on the case, noting that he filed it on May 26, 2004.

"I've waited for too long. It appears that they're sitting on this," Chavez said in an interview.

"Records of the Office of the Ombudsman will show that during the entire pendency of this complaint, I sent a series of letters to the Ombudsman following up and pushing for the investigation of this charge and the eventual requirement for respondents to file their counter-affidavits," he said.

Chavez, a former solicitor general, said the Ombudsman should require Ms Arroyo and the other respondents to submit their counter-affidavits.

Prima facie case

"Both the Senate committee report and the COA special audit report incontrovertibly establish, at the very least, a prima facie case against respondents, who should now, therefore be required—after an inexplicable inaction and delay of almost two years—to submit their respective counter-affidavits," Chavez said in a one-page motion.

Besides Ms Arroyo, the other respondents are former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr., former Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, Budget Undersecretary Mario Relampagos, Director Nora Oliveros, former Agriculture Assistant Secretary Ibarra Poliquit and Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante.

The 19-page complaint also charged the alleged "runners"—Jimmy Paule, Rose Lingan-Florendo, Leny Aquino and Jane Fabian.

In their report released in March, the Senate committee on agriculture, together with the blue ribbon committee, said Ms Arroyo should be "held accountable" for the mismanagement of the fertilizer fund because the evidence showed that she had knowledge of the fund releases and had benefited from them.

Overpriced/no bidding

Preliminary results of the COA "special audit" found that part of the P100 million in recovered Marcos wealth intended for the farm inputs program was used to buy fertilizer overpriced by a total of P42.4 million.

The P100 million was part of the P544 million in Marcos funds that the administration released weeks before the May 2004 election to buy seeds and fertilizer for the GMA hybrid rice program. It came from the P35-billion Marcos Swiss bank deposits that were recovered in late 2003.

Funds from the GMA rice program were also used to purchase farm machines that found their way to the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City, according to the COA report. The machines were overpriced and were purchased without a bidding.

Solons, govs, mayors

COA records showed that more than 100 of the 236 members of the House of Representatives, 53 governors and 26 town mayors received between P3 million and P10 million each in fertilizer funds from the Department of Agriculture shortly before the May 2004 election.

Chavez said that while the case was gathering dust in the Office of the Ombudsman, the Senate had conducted and terminated its investigation of the fertilizer fund scam. It also forwarded its report to the Ombudsman.

COA confirmation

"On top of this, the (COA), by a special audit report dated March 31, 2006, also confirmed the anomalies, irregularities and corruption that attended the release and disbursements of the fertilizer funds," Chavez said.

"It is respectfully prayed that respondents be now required to submit their counter-affidavits so that the investigation of the matters treated in this complaint can get going without further delay," he said.

Military probes Lim, Querubin . . .

From page A1

tigators "don't want any pressure from any sector."

No details about the testimonies of Lim and Querubin, who were removed from their posts after the plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo was discovered, have been made available.

At a press conference on Monday, military spokesperson Gen. Jose Honrado did not inform reporters of the investigation despite the fact that Lim was at about the same time facing a hearing at the nearby Commissioned Officers Country Club (COC) building.

"The investigation will be fair and just. There will be no stonewalling," Kison told reporters.

Mayuga report release today

In a related development, Kison said AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga and the Navy chief, Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga, would release at a news conference today the results of an investigation into the alleged involvement in election cheating of senior military officials, supposedly revealed in the "Hello Garci" tapes.

The AFP was forced to appoint a fact-finding board in late July after a number of officers threatened to go on mass leave or mass resignation unless it investigated officers implicated in the scandal, including Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

The board, headed by Mayuga, wrapped up its investigation last October but its findings were withheld from the public while the Armed Forces and the Department of Defense were ostensibly waiting for Malacañang to order the release of the report.

Earlier yesterday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters in Baguio City that President Macapagal-Arroyo had approved the Mayuga report and had directed the AFP to release it to the public.

After Malacañang gave the go-signal, Mayuga reportedly met with senior officials at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday to discuss how to go about releasing the report.

The Army last March recommended that Lim and 19 other officers face court-martial charges of mutiny over the failed coup attempt.

According to official accounts, Lim and Querubin went to Senga on Feb. 23, the eve of the supposed coup, and told the AFP chief that they intended to lead their men in joining the protest rallies at Edsa the next day and declare their withdrawal of support from the President.

On Feb. 26, Querubin forced a six-hour standoff at Fort Bonifacio to protest the relief of his superior, Marine Commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda. In interviews with reporters, Querubin admitted that he was supposed to have led a contingent of Marines to Edsa on Feb. 24 but the plan fell through.

The Marines only investigated the Feb. 26 standoff and not the Feb. 24 coup plot.

Consolidate reports

Senga has ordered the Inspector General, Rear Admiral Rufino Lopez, the head of the panel, to consolidate the reports of the Army and the Marine investigations into the failed coup plot.

Kison could not say how the Lopez inquiry could consolidate the two probe reports.

"Possibly they will look into it in its entirety, how General Lim's actions were connected to Colonel Querubin's actions," he said.

"They will try to fill in the gaps. They will call in witnesses to fill in the gaps," Kison added.

At the start of the inquiry yesterday, Lopez refused to talk to reporters.

Mum's the word

Another panel member, acting Judge Advocate General Col. Caridad Aguilar refused to acknowledge journalists staked out at the COP office.

Escorted by two soldiers, a stern-faced Querubin walked past waiting reporters who similarly failed to get a word from him.

Earlier yesterday, Marine Col. Jonathan Martir, head of the Marine Combat and Service Support Group, testified before the investigating panel.

Opposition Senators Aquilino Pimentel and Rodolfo Biazon yesterday welcomed Malacañang's order releasing the Mayuga report, even if it came late.

"That's good. It's about time that the Mayuga report is brought openly to the attention of the people and I can only hope that the report, as prepared by Mayuga, whatever it is, should come out for the information of the public," Pimentel said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, the chair of the Senate defense committee that conducted six hearings into the wiretapping scandal, heaved a sigh of relief.

The "Hello Garci" scandal revolved around supposed wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which they discussed the results of the 2004 elections.

Senate to invite 72 witnesses

Biazon said he planned to invite the 72 witnesses that Mayuga had questioned in the military inquiry into the scandal.

Biazon said the report would be on the agenda of his committee's next hearing in late May.

The senators have been demanding a copy of the report since late last year, but defense and military officials said it was for the President to authorize its release.

Pimentel stressed that the report should be disclosed to the public in its entirety.

"Whatever it is, whether in favor or against the people involved, what is important is that the results of the investigation are shared with the people and so we can take a stand after that for or against the report," he said. *With reports from TJ Burgonio and Christine Avendaño*

LIM

QUERUBIN

Correction

IN THE APRIL 9 issue, a story on Page A2—"Senate asked to pass '06 budget quickly"—misstated that Sen. Manuel Villar is the Senate President. The Senate President is Franklin Drilon.

* * *

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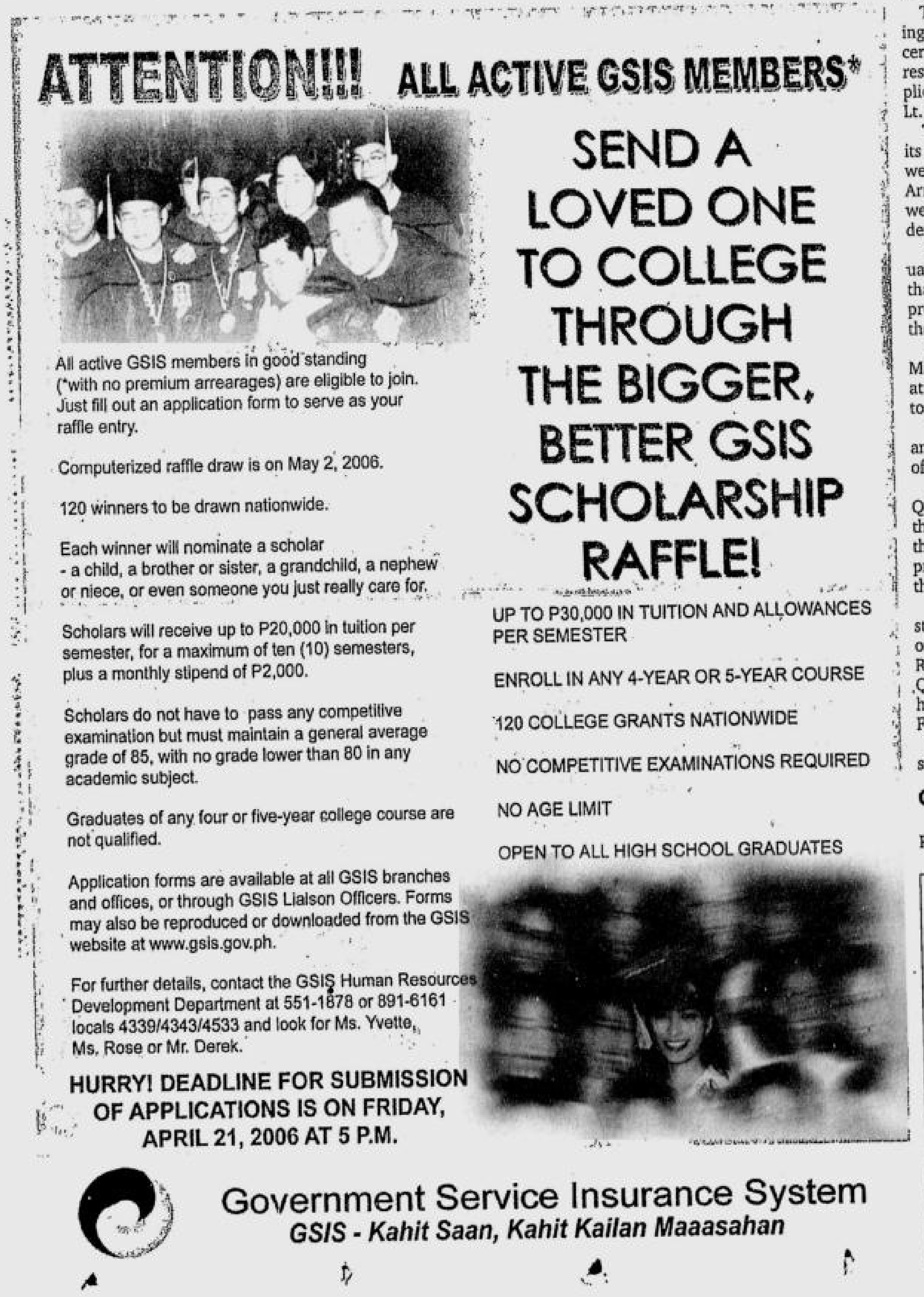

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Ibon poll sees bleak future for Cha-cha

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE FUTURE SEEMS TO BE GETting bleaker for Charter change as yet another survey revealed a larger number of Filipinos are not in favor of amending the 1987 Constitution.

Only 68 percent of Filipinos, in fact, are aware that the Arroyo administration has a proposal to amend the Constitution, according to a survey conducted by the Ibon Foundation on March 16-25.

Of those who were aware of the government's move, three-fourths or 76 percent were not in favor of Charter change, the research group said, adding that the number of people opposed to amending the Constitution has been growing since 2004.

In Ibon's January 2006 survey, only 65 percent were opposed to amending the Constitution, but this figure was an increase from 51 percent in March 2005 and 47 percent in March 2004.

Ibon said in a statement that its latest survey covered 1,416 respondents randomly selected from the voters' list.

It said people were asked only two questions on Charter change: Do you know that the Arroyo administration has a proposal to amend or change the Philippine Constitution? Are you in favor of the proposal of the current administration to change the 1987 Constitution?

The noise created by the Charter change issue apparently has worked to build awareness of the issue as only 29 percent of the respondents remained ignorant of the proposal from 42 percent in January, Ibon said.

Only 15 percent agreed to the government's proposal for Charter change. Six percent did not have an opinion, according to Ibon.

An alliance of pro-Charter change groups called Sigaw ng Bayan claims to have collected more than eight million signatures or more than 12 percent of the registered voters nationwide, which is required to call a plebiscite to approve constitutional amendments made through a people's initiative.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 12, 2006
Wednesday of Holy Week

1st Reading: Is 50:4-9
Gospel: Matthew 26:14-25

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went off to the chief priests and said, "How much will you give me if I hand him over to you?" They promised to give him thirty pieces of silver, and from then on he kept looking for the best way to hand him over to them.

On the first day of the Festival of the Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?" Jesus answered, "Go into the city, to the house of a certain man, and tell him: 'The Master says: My hour is near, and I will celebrate the Passover with my disciples in your house.'"

The disciples did as Jesus had ordered and prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, Jesus sat at table with the Twelve. While they were eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you: One of you will betray me." They were deeply distressed and asked him in turn, "You do not mean me, do you, Lord?"

He answered, "He who will betray me is one of those who dips his bread in the dish with me. The Son of Man is going as the Scriptures say he will. But alas for that one who betrays the Son of Man; better for him not to have been born." Judas, who was betraying him, also asked, "You do not mean me, Master, do you?" Jesus replied, "You have said it."

Commentary

Again we are told what we are to look like in the face of persecution, suffering and death because we have practiced justice and told the truth, offering compassion to those in need. We are told to be prophets of justice nonviolently, standing and taking the pain of others into our own lives, and morning after morning, opening our ears to the Word of God. We must know as Jesus does that he is betrayed by one he called friend—cheaply for just 30 pieces of silver. They are all distressed at the table, but they all betray, each in their own way.

How often do we betray the Lord for something small—what we want or acceptance by others? And we betray God with our friends, families, parish and nation, and yet we feed on the bread of life.

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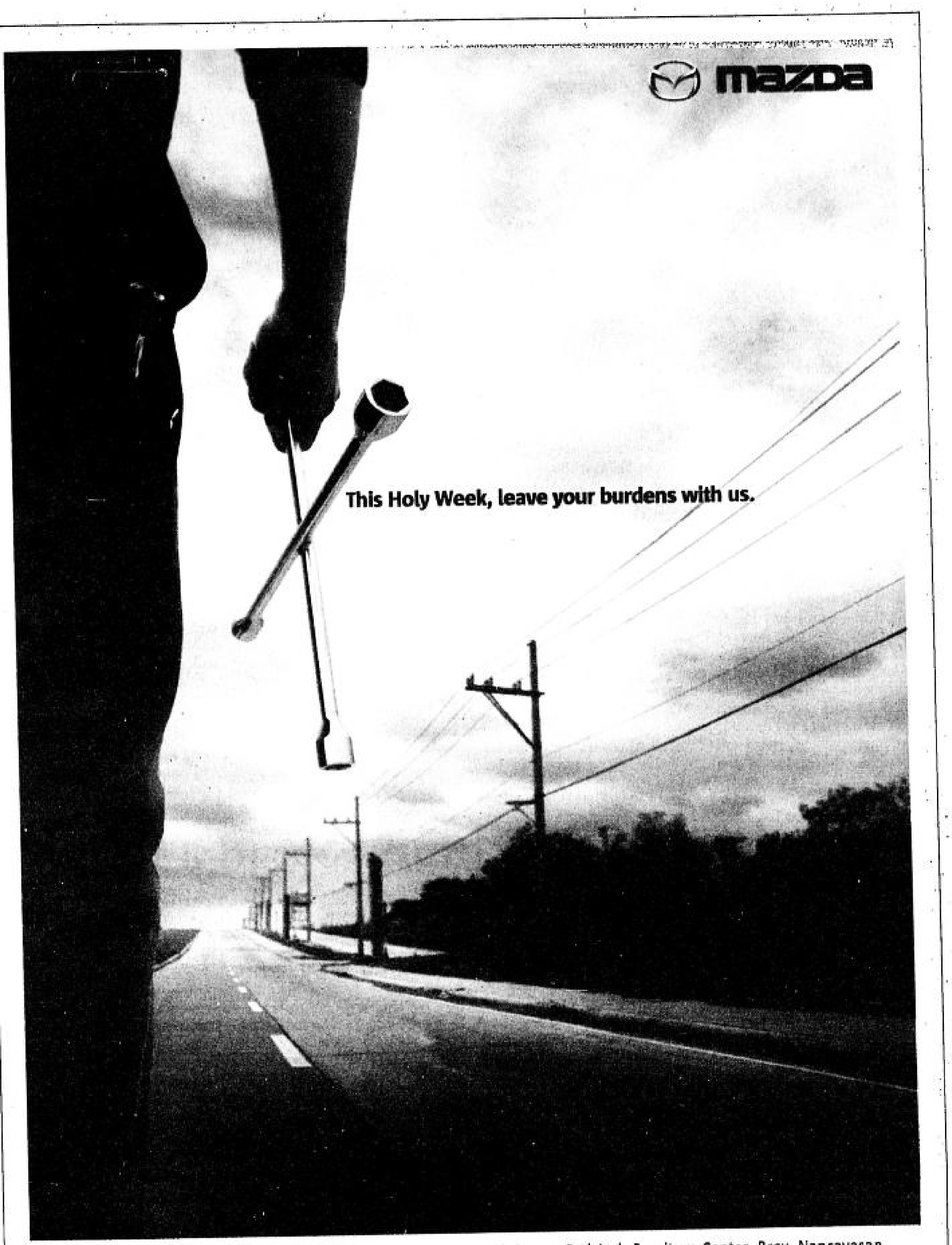

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Palace giveth, taketh

From page A1

tion for candidates for National Artist is ongoing and one of the candidates is Mr. Fernando Poe Jr. Even as Malacañang awaits the final selection of National Artist, it supports and welcomes Mr. Poe's nomination as National Artist."

This would have been the second posthumous award to be bestowed by the President on her political rival. Poe was awarded the Presidential Medal of Merit shortly before he was buried in December 2004.

The Malacañang announcement said that the six had been recommended by the joint boards of commissioners of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the trustees of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and "have received confirmation from the President."

Jeremy Barns, the head of the Presidential Museum in Malacañang, had informed Bunye in a memorandum that the President on March 30 had given her confirmation to the six people recommended for conferral of the rank and title of National Artist.

In his memo, Barns claimed that the media release on the National Artists list was submitted to the Office of the President for public announcement "with the instructions given to me by the Chief of Presidential Protocol."

Barns could not be reached for comment yesterday.

RETREATING FROM THE HEAT, the city's and the crisis', President Arroyo chills out at the Mansion in Baguio with Cabinet officials who are not abroad on holiday. From left, Secretaries Roberto Pagdanganan, Rolando Andaya, Eduardo Ermita, Raul Gonzalez, Jess Dureza, Esperanza Cabral, Joseph Durano. LYN RILLON

Sources in the cultural community said the flip-flopping might have less to do with Poe than with Malacañang's probable intention to add another name to the list as lobbying is strongly going on for some ambitious candidates.

Additional names

The National Artist Awards have been attended by controversy in recent years because of the presidents' tendency to add names which had not been recommended by the vetting body, according to the sources. But they added that presidents are technically allowed to do this as they are the final arbiter of the awards.

Two years ago, Ms Arroyo added Alejandro Roces as awardee for literature. Deposed President Joseph Estrada added the name of Ernani Cuenco for music, former President Fidel Ramos awarded Carlos Quirino for historical literature and the dictator Ferdinand Marcos honored Carlos P. Romulo for literature. None of them were in the original list of recommendees, the sources said.

NCCA executive director and presidential adviser on culture Cecile Alvarez said Poe went through the entire process, including the two council of peers' review.

She said Poe's name had been on the nominees' list from the start and that his name was not added by the President to the list.

The Order of National Artists, created by Proclamation No. 1001 of Marcos in 1972 is the highest national recognition given to Filipinos who have made significant contributions to the arts.

An awardee receives a medallion and citation, P100,000 for living awardees and P70,000 for posthumous awardees' legal heirs, a monthly pension, medical benefits and a state funeral.

22 officials join Gloria in Baguio retreat; 9 abroad

From page A1

will be doing their devotions elsewhere.

The nine are abroad, either on holiday or fulfilling official commitments, according to the Presidential Management Staff.

Presidential aides said that the week would focus on what is called "spiritually reflective activities" and would consciously avoid political discussions.

According to a list provided by the PMS, the nine Cabinet secretaries who opted to spend the holiday abroad were: Vice President Noli de Castro and Secretaries Margarito Teves (finance), Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. (public works), Patricia Sto. Tomas (labor), Avelino Cruz Jr. (defense), Raphael Lotilla (energy), Romulo Neri (socioeconomic planning), Ronaldo Puno (interior) and Ignacio Bunye (press).

Also absent were National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

Second-tier portfolios

Ms Arroyo arrived here yesterday for the two-day retreat that will last until today.

The 22 officials, many handling second-tier Cabinet portfolios, who were staying for the retreat included:

Secretaries Rolando Andaya Jr. (budget), Angelo Reyes (environment), Raul Gonzalez (justice), Joseph Ace Durano (tourism), Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor.

The INQUIRER also saw Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza and Roberto Pagdanganan, president of the Philippine International Trading Corp., going to the Mansion, the presidential residence here.

PMS listed Trade Secretary Peter Favila among the officials vacationing overseas, but at press time, officials said he had joined the group here.

The complete cast

The PMS said the following secretaries had confirmed they were joining the retreat: Alberto Romulo (foreign affairs), Domingo Panganiban (agriculture), Francisco Duque III (health), Estrella Alabastro (science and technology), Esperanza Cabral (social welfare), Marlon Advincula, chair of the National Anti-Poverty Commission; Conrado Limcaoco of the Philippine Information Agency; Cerge Remonde, head of the government mass media group, and Press Undersecretary Ricardo Saludo.

The First Family is spending the holidays here until Monday.

Today, the officials are expected from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to sit through discussions facilitated by Presidential Assistant Fatima Valdez, Office of the President staff members Lita Salinas and Ester Seguera, and PMS Undersecretary Malou Frostrom.

"It's a retreat so we can advance," Environment Secretary Reyes told reporters.

Soul-searching

"It's a retreat for some soul-searching," he said. "Then you regroup for self-examination and introspection. It's good for the health, for the mind, for the individual and the whole country."

Andaya said the Cabinet retreat would not dwell on the recent pastoral letter against the people's initiative that was issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

The initiative, he said, "is not a moral issue."

Before the retreat started, some Palace officials still found time to discuss "pork."

Need for pork

"Every year the pork is always an issue ... But on the part of the DBM (Department of Budget and Management), it is not really the amount that we are looking at. We're going to monitor how these amounts will be used)," he said.

"We will make sure that whatever amount they agree to share among themselves ... all the expenditures out of these funds will be geared toward the 10-point agenda of the President," Andaya said.

"This is for electricity, water, education and infrastructure. We prohibit the construction of basketball courts, waiting sheds and road humps," Andaya said.

Malacañang's pork allocations will "still prohibit" fertilizer subsidies, he said.

National artists in waiting: Six in a fix

BIENVENIDO LUMBERA FOR Literature. A poet, playwright, essayist and literary critic, Lumbera has been a professor at the University of the Philippines College of Arts and Letters since 1976. In 1993, he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts. The Lipa native graduated cum laude with a journalism degree from the University of Santo Tomas in 1954 and received master's and doctorate degrees from the Indiana University in the US. His "Sunog sa Lipa at Iba Pang Tula" won a special prize in the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature in 1975. In 1991, he received the Gawad CCP (Cultural Center of the Philippines) Para sa Sining for literature and cultural research.

Ramon Obusan for Dance. A graduate of marine biology and cultural anthropology from the University of the Philippines, he left his teaching job at the Aklan National School of Fisheries to become a dancer and researcher of the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company. In 1971, he founded his own dance group, and later choreographed and directed about 45 dance groups and more than 100 productions nationwide. Obusan also documented the culture of Filipino ethnic groups, winning the grand prize in a French competition (Prix de Reportage) for the documentary "Sayaw" in 1990.

Benedicto Cabrera for Visual Arts. More popularly known as Bencab, Cabrera is considered a master of contemporary Philippine art. He has exhibited his paintings not just in the Philippines, but also in Asia, Europe and the United States. In 1992, he received the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining. He is a fine arts graduate of the UP.

Ildefonso Santos Jr. for Architecture. He has two bachelor's degrees in architecture, one from the University of Santo Tomas (1954), and another from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles (1956), where he also finished his master's degree. Upon returning in 1963, Santos established his own architecture firm which undertook local and international projects. Among his works are the Caliraya Lake Resort in Laguna and the Raintree Sports Club in Kuala Lumpur. He also set up the "Execution of Dr. Jose.Rizal" at Rizal Park. In 1986, Santos became head of UP's graduate program in tropical landscape architecture.

Fernando Poe Jr. for Film. Actor-producer-director Poe, Ronald Allan Kelly Poe in real life, was known as the "King of Philippine Movies." The masses embraced him for his portrayal of tough guys battling tremendous odds in defending the oppressed. He has won five Famas Best Actor trophies for the films "Mga Alabok sa Lupa" (1967), "Asedillo" (1971), "Durugin si Totoy Bato" (1979), "Umpisahan Mo, Tatapusin Ko" (1983) and "Muslim Magnum .357" (1986). For these, he was elevated to the Famas Hall of Fame. He was President Macapagal-Arroyo's closest rival in the 2004 presidential contest. Poe died in 2005.

Ramon Valera for Fashion Design. Known as the man who revolutionized the terno by removing the *panuelo*, the cape-like addition to the traditional Filipino dress to cover the chest, Valera was considered the top Filipino designer from the 1930s to the 1960s, designing for first ladies and members of Manila's elite. Valera was said to have paved the way for male designers in a field once dominated by women. He died in 1972 at age 59. *PDI Research*

President names Davide RP ambassador to the UN

From page A1

"I have the honor to submit for consent of the Commission on Appointments, the nomination of Hon. Hilario Davide Jr., as permanent representative of the Republic of the Philippines to the (UN) in New York, with the salary and emoluments of Chief of Mission, Class I, vice Lauro L. Baja Jr.," the President said.

"Early consent to his nomination will be highly appreciated," the President added.

Davide's appointment came after he proposed the revamp of the Commission on Elections, among other electoral reforms, as the President's adviser on electoral reforms.

Earlier news reports said Baja was coming back to Manila to replace Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, who will reportedly be made the country's ambassador to Washington.

It was Davide who presided over the aborted impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada in the Senate five years ago. The decision of pro-Estrada senators to reject on Jan. 16, 2001, the opening of an envelope allegedly containing the amounts deposited in his secret "Jose Velarde" bank account triggered the people power that ousted him.

After Estrada was ousted, Davide administered the oath of office to Ms Arroyo at the Edsa Shrine.

Davide later led the Supreme Court in declaring constitutional Estrada's removal from office and Ms Arroyo's assumption of the presidency.

In 2003, Davide faced an attempt by the Nationalist People's Coalition in the House of Representatives to impeach him over the alleged misuse of the Judiciary Development Fund. The attempt failed after the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional.

Good political move

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Davide's appointment was a "good political move" for the President but not necessarily for the former head of the country's judiciary.

"It's a good choice for Gloria but I wonder if it is good for Jun Davide. You know, the reason why I say that is, once you have attained the position of chief justice and you retire from it, I mean, what other honors can you aspire for?" Pimentel said.

Pimentel said it would not be surprising if the President would make changes in her Cabinet, adding that this might have something to do with the administration's push for Charter change.

"That will not be surprising. This administration, I think, has a penchant for musical chairs. As a matter of fact, right now, they are looking at a *rigodon* of personalities in high echelons of government and that is why they are pushing for Cha-cha," Pimentel said.

"The tune is Cha-cha but the musical chairs will take effect if they're able to push through with the Charter change by July," he said.

Inquirer bags Grand Anvil Award

From page A1

relations, the Anvil Awards are the most prestigious given in recognition of outstanding corporate programs and tools for public relations. On hand to receive the award were PDI president and CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, EVP David Valdes, Connie Kalagayan, manager for strategic marketing communications, and InqPulse project director Hazell Gonzales.

The Grand Anvil Award is the first for the INQUIRER. PDI has received previous Anvil Awards of Merit for its campaigns such as the New Paper Drive, a program that promotes solid waste management by buying old newspapers and tabloids; the Job Market television ads for revitalized products or services, and the INQUIRER's Youth Readership Program, a series of activities promoting reading toward the development of a socially aware and critically thinking youth.

Striving for excellence

Romualdez, in accepting the award, said that Anvil's recognition "is a testament to the 20 years of PDI as we strive to do excellent work."

THE WINNING SMILES: From left, Vic del Fierro Jr., chair of the 41st Anvil Society of the Philippines (PRSP); Connie Kalagayan, manager for Strategic Marketing Communication; Heherson Alvarez, chair of the board of judges; Hazell Gonzales, Inqpulse project director; Sandy P. Romualdez, president/CEO; Dave Valdes, EVP for corporate services and Winston Marabella, PRSP president. RYAN LIM

"We always try to serve our stakeholders better and to connect our inner sense with them for us to have a better Philippines," she said.

Four key strategies

Four key strategies were developed to support the program. These are the InqPulse Executive Forum, InqPulse Beats newsletter, InqPulse Value Program and InqPulse Golf Tournament.

With InqPulse Executive Forum, the INQUIRER organizes specialized forums which encompass significant global and local marketing trends, strategies and business solutions exclusive to its top 50 clients. These seminars cater to executives, marketing directors, senior and middle managers and brand managers and are done through partnerships with agencies and institutions dedicated to motivational learning and personal growth.

Two successful forums have been organized so far. The first was held on May 27, 2005, at the AIM Conference Center with the theme focusing on emerging global trends and practices. Featured guest speakers were Tiger Airways president and CEO Tony Davis and Gavin Coombes, executive vice president for Euro RSCG Asia-Pacific.

The second was held on Aug. 23, 2005, at the Makati Shangri-La with an international marketing guru sharing his marketing expertise on the topic "Seven Things Marketers and Advertisers Miss—That Lost Them Millions." Both forums were attended by executives, marketing and PR directors from the country's top firms like Cebu Pacific, Asia Brewery, Digitel, Smart, Globe, SM, Unilab, Petron, Ayala Corp., Jollibee, Hewlett-Packard, the Araneta Group, among others.

Newsletter

The InqPulse Beats newsletter serves as a channel to communicate PDI initiatives, corporate events and share relevant industry updates and information with clients. Released bi-monthly, it first came out in April 2005 and has a circulation of 1,000 copies exclusively distributed to INQUIRER's loyal patrons. Featured industries include automotive, retail, real estate, consumer electronics and beauty and wellness.

Regular sections comprised of the cover story (latest trends and updates of featured industry), Digits (numbers that matter), InFocus (a specific niche product is highlighted in every issue), InqTrivia (trivia questions about the featured product), In the Loop (reserved section for company announcements, promos or events), News on News (latest industry researches), CommunINQ (INQUIRER sponsored and corporate events and advocacy programs) and Business Horoscope.

Its editorial advisory board includes PDI publisher Isagani Yambot, PDI business editor Raul Marcelo and Kalagayan.

Value program

The InqPulse Value Program seeks to successfully extend the INQUIRER brand to its key clients through birthday, anniversary and Christmas alerts through its customer relations management (CRM) database. It also gives clients free access to movie screenings, concerts, corporate events and seminars.

Golf tournament

Lastly, the INQUIRER holds an exclusive play-off dubbed the "InqPulse Golf Tournament" for company CEOs and executives. One activity had distinguished best-selling author Dr. John Maxwell participating in the game. Joined by the INQUIRER management and other PDI partners, the event was highlighted by Dr. Maxwell giving a talk on team leadership and execution.

Fil-Ams join US immigration protests

WASHINGTON—WEARING A white T-shirt with the red, blue and yellow Filipino flag on it and crying "justice, justice," Filipino-American Sasha Angara Bennet joined massive protests Monday to defend one million Asians considered illegal immigrants in the United States.

Common issue

"I think it is a common issue we are fighting here," said the 30-year-old who together with several hundred Asian protestors seemed drowned in the sea of Latinos demonstrating near Capitol Hill against a proposed crackdown on the estimated 11.5 million illegal immigrants.

Most of the illegals in the United States are Latinos, who formed the dominant force in the protests in more than 100 US cities Monday. *(See related story in The World, Page A20)*

A bill passed by the House of Representatives would make it a felony to be in the United States without proper papers, and a federal crime to aid illegal immigrants.

Police crackdown

One provision effectively allows the police cracking down on illegal immigrants to detain suspects first and verify citizenship status later, which rights groups say smacks of racism.

Bennet, born in Nigeria to an American father and Filipino mother who have since divorced, obtained her US citizenship on reaching 21 years. She then sponsored and won permanent residency for her mom, "who overstayed her tourist visa."

'Proud to be Fil-Am'

Holding a flag with the words "Proud to be a Filipino-American, she said: "Like me, many children of illegal immigrants born in the United States are waiting to be 21 years so that they can also sponsor their parents for permanent residency.

"We should not deprive them of citizenship," she said.

Numbering more than two million, Filipinos in the United States make up one of the largest immigrant groups but a significant number of them are undocumented, rights groups say.

Immigration reforms

"We need immigration reforms that will promote unification of families," said Pak Chung, a 47-year-old attorney who led about 500 Korean-Americans in the Washington protests.

One in every five Koreans in the United States, numbering around one million, is reportedly undocumented.

Family values

"There are many who have been here for at least 10 years (but are not considered legal immigrants) and who have kids born here who are already American citizens.

"If you deport them, you are dividing their families. And how can this happen in a country bent on promoting family values?" said Pak, who came here as a legal immigrant in 1971. *AFP*

Malaysian police hunt Pinoy illegals who escaped

KUALA LUMPUR—MALAYSIAN police on Tuesday intensified the hunt for 60 Filipino and Indonesian illegal immigrants who escaped from a detention camp last week after a riot broke out, a senior official said.

A total of 73 detainees fled the center in eastern Sabah state on Borneo Island on Friday. Eleven were recaptured while two others later surrendered, said Shah Ghazali Khan, police chief of Sabah's capital, Kota Kinabalu.

13 Filipinos

All 13 were Filipinos and included a woman and several children, he said.

Shah Ghazali said the riot broke out when a female detainee at the center in Menggatal, just outside Kota Kinabalu, was refused permission to take her daughter to a hospital. During the commotion, 73 detainees escaped by scaling wire-mesh security fences, he said.

Intensify hunt

Police were still verifying the nationalities of the 60 people at large, but most were believed to be Filipinos, he said.

"We are intensifying our hunt for them but there is no need for villagers to fear. The escapees are not dangerous," he told The Associated Press.

Menggatal center

He said police also rounded up a number of illegal immigrants and were in the process of verifying if they were among the escapees.

Some 1,400 detainees are held at the Menggatal center, which is meant to temporarily house illegal immigrants pending deportation. Often, however, authorities in their own countries refuse to take them back, demanding stronger proof of citizenship.

Speed up repatriation

Philippine officials said Monday they would work to speed up the repatriation of 1,173 Filipinos, including 151 boys and 90 girls, held at the Menggatal camp.

Sabah has an extensive land border with Indonesia's Kalimantan province, and is separated from the southern Philippines by a short boat ride. Many illegal immigrants cross the border to seek work in wealthier Malaysia. *AP*

Kids' travels eased

THE GOVERNMENT has simplified the paper requirements for minors traveling overseas.

A person aged 18 years and below will no longer need a travel clearance from the Department of Social Welfare and Development under the following circumstances:

- If he or she is traveling abroad with either a parent or with a legal guardian;
- If the minor traveling alone can show proof that his parents are in the foreign service or are living abroad—the proof can be in the form of a dependent's visa, valid pass or ID that will show that he is living with his parents overseas.

Considered a measure against child trafficking, a clearance must still be secured from the DSWD and presented at the airport by a minor living in the Philippines who is traveling alone or is accompanied by a person other than his parents.

The new guidelines took effect on March 31 under DSWD Administrative Order 02-2006, a statement which was faxed to the INQUIRER yesterday by the Bureau of Immigration office at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. *Volt Contreras*

MEDICard - JAKA Group of Companies Signing

Group of Co
MEDIC

JAKA Group of Companies recently signed the renewal of its healthcare agreement with MEDICard Philippines, Inc. (seated L-R) MEDICard's Luis S. Montoya (EVP & GM) and Dr. Nicanor D. Montoya (President) with JAKA's Katrina C. Ponce Enrile (President & CEO) and Antonio J. Lim (Senior EVP). (standing L-R) MEDICard's Dr. Voltaire R. Victoria (Sales & Business Dev't Mngr.) and Teresa M. Tribunal (Mktg. Asst.) with Sevenfold Health-Serve's Alexander Bombay (Vice President), Reynaldo J. Chua (President) and Severino dela Chica (Director).

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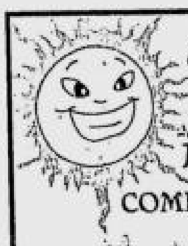
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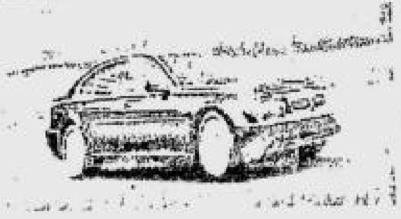
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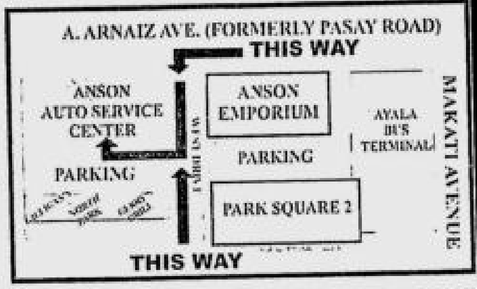

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The Puerto Princesa City Water District through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of the Project : Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of One Assembly Booster Pump, Electrical System and Accessories
Location : Corner Manalo-Lacao St., Puerto Princesa City
Brief Description : Design, supply, install and commissioning of one assembly encapsulated (pump-in-a-tube) Booster Pump multi-parallel submersible pump capable to deliver 305 cubic meter/hr at 50 meters total dynamic head (TDH) and 230 driving voltage. The control system is equipped with variable speed drive, soft starter, and logic programmable controller and accessories to meet the design operating parameter, and enclosed with IP67 NEMA standard as described in Section VIII, Technical Specifications in the Bid Documents
Approved Budget : Three Million Thirty Three Thousand Five Hundred Forty Nine Pesos (P3,033,549.00) Only
Delivery Period : Thirty (30) Calendar Days from the receipt of the Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least fifty percent (50%) of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	April 17, 2006 – April 28, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	May 3, 2006, 1:30 P.M., PPCWD Board Room
3. Deadline for Submission of Bids	May 16, 2006, 1:30 P.M., PPCWD Board Room
4. Opening of Bids	May 16, 2006, 1:30 P.M., PPCWD Board Room

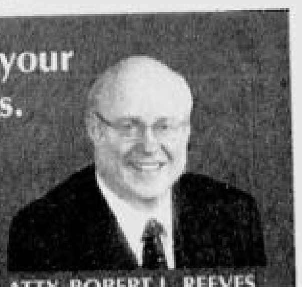
Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Pesos (Php3,000.00) to the Puerto Princesa City Water District Cashier.

The Puerto Princesa City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by.
(Sgd.) ENGR. VICENTE D. ABREA
PPCWD BAC Chairman

(PDI-April 12 & 19, 2006)

Searching for the American Dream?



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Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B
PSDC Bldg., P. Burgos cor. Alegre Sts., Batangas City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Contract for Security Services of PRO IV-B
ITB# PRO4B-06-006

The **PHILHEALTH REGIONAL OFFICE IV-B (PRO IV-B)** through the corporate operating budget of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation 2006 intends to apply the sum of **two million one hundred eleven thousand seven hundred and fifty pesos (P2,111,750.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Security Services. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The PRO IV-B now invites Bids from eligible bidders for the Re-bid of Security Services. This contract shall take effect on **June 1, 2006 until December 31, 2006**. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organization of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder of the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from April 12 to April 26, 2006 at the address written below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of *two thousand pesos* (Php 2,000.00). The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The PRO IV-B will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **April 26, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the 3rd floor, Conference Room, PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B.

Bids and Eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **May 10, 2006, 11:00 a.m.** Late bids shall not be accepted. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms and amount.

Bid opening shall be on **May 10, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the 3rd Floor, Conference Room, PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

FORM OF SECURITY	Minimum Amount in % of ABC to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit.	One percent (1%)
2. Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2%)

The PRO IV-B reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Rhonalyn Marasigen / Johnrey Iguiron (BAC Secretariats)
PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B
PSDC Bldg. #89 P. Burgos corner Alegre Sts., Batangas City
Tel. No. (043)723-8822 loc. 201
Facsimile No. (043)723-8822 loc. 409
e-mail address: region4b@philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) CIRILO C. BALMACEDA
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–April 12 & 19, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City
E-mail Address: ltombox@lto.gov.ph • Website: www.lto.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

106 units Patrol Motor Cycles for the use of LTO Sectoral Head Office, Regional Offices, CAR & CARAGA

The Land Transportation Office, through Fund 151 (MVUC) intends to apply the sum of Fourteen Million Five Hundred Sixty Thousand Pesos (P14,560,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of payment for the 106 units Patrol Motor Cycles for the use of LTO Sectoral Head Office, Regional Offices, CAR & CARAGA. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Land Transportation Office now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the items. The required delivery schedule will be indicated in the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responssiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Sub-Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php 10,000.00, in the form of cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Land Transportation Office will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on April 21, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. at the LTO-Library East Avenue, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before May 3, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half Percent (1 ½%)
3. Surety bond	Two and a half Percent (2 ½%)
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)

Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on May 3, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. at LTO-Library, East Avenue, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Land Transportation Office reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Land Transportation Office
Atty. Jimmy G. Pesigan – Chairman, BAC
East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 921-9077 – telefax

Engr. Roberto S. Se, Chairman, BAC Sub-Committee
Property Section, LTO, East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 9292015 – telefax

(Sgd.) ATTY. JIMMY G. PESIGAN
BAC-Chairman

(PDI – April 12, 2006)

RP tourist spots better than others, says Chinese envoy

By Volt Contreras

THE PHILIPPINES' TOURIST attractions top those in two wealthier Southeast Asian nations, according to the top Chinese diplomat in Manila.

"In my view, the Philippines has richer tourism resources than Malaysia and Singapore," said Ambassador Li Jinjun last week at a forum exploring the future of RP-Sino relations in view of China's emergence as an economic giant to rival the United States and Japan.

Relatively small

Li, who was assigned to Manila last November, noted that Chinese tourists to the Philippines totaled 100,000 last year, twice the number that came in 2004.

This, however, is still a "relatively small" chunk of the 32 million Chinese citizens who travel abroad each year and is also lower than the number of Chinese who visit other countries in the region, he said. Last year, for example, 1.5 million Chinese visited Thailand and 800,000 went to Singapore.

Grow rapidly

"If the number of Chinese tourists coming to the Philippines reaches one million and each tourist spends $1,000, it will add $1 billion to the income of the Philippines," he said.

Speaking at the forum organized by the Philippine Council for Foreign Relations, Li said he believes the volume of Chinese visitors to the country will grow rapidly in the next few years since tourism is among the key areas of cooperation between Beijing and Manila.

The other areas are in the fields of trade, agriculture, infrastructure development, and investment, Li said in remarks later posted on the Chinese embassy website.

RP-Sino trade

"The Chinese government is now carrying out active research and encouraging Chinese enterprises to expand their investments in the Philippines. We will promote investments not only in large-scale cooperative projects, but also in middle-scale and small-scale projects. We will expand the fields of investment cooperation," he said.

The volume of RP-Sino trade is expected to exceed $20 billion this year, and "if we can make joint efforts to tap into the full potential of our bilateral trade, it will be quite possible to achieve the 2010 goal of $30 billion ahead of time," Li said.

Infrastracture construction

The diplomat said his country could also help the Philippines solve the "problem of food shortage" by expanding cooperation in the production and processing of hybrid rice and corn, coconut products and vegetables.

China will also continue to support infrastructure construction in the Philippines "as far as our capacity allows," he said, citing as an example the NorthRail project which is funded by a $900-million Chinese loan.

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16 - 22 President's Cup Regatta / China Sea Race
17 - 18 Summer Swimming Batch 1
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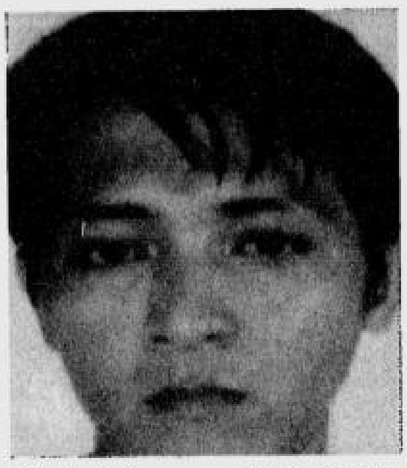
Alleged Abu leader who killed US soldier slain

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A SUSPECTED Abu Sayyaf leader, who landed in Washington's list of terrorists for bombings that included an attack that killed an American serviceman in 2002, and his father were killed during a shootout with authorities in Curuan district here early yesterday morning.

Col. Edgardo Gidaya, commander of the antiterror Task Force Zamboanga, identified the slain suspect as Amilhamja Ajijul, alias Alex Alvarez. The father was identified as Andalul Ajijul.

Gidaya said the elder Ajijul was killed when Alvarez's group exchanged shots with authorities at around 3 a.m. in sitio Dulian in Barangay Calabasa.



FILE photo shows suspected Abu Sayyaf leader Amilhamja Ajijul, alias Alex Alvarez. Alvarez was the alleged mastermind of the Malagutay bombing, where a US serviceman was killed in 2002. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Critically wounded

Alvarez was critically wounded in the 30-minute gunfight and died while being treated at a hospital.

The United States had put a bounty of $20,000 on his head and, according to Senior Supt. Angelito Casimiro of the Western Mindanao police, another P350,000 under the interior department's reward program.

Casimiro said Alvarez and his men were also wanted for crimes other than the bombings like kidnapping and murder.

Four arrested

Four of Alvarez's companions were arrested. They were identified as Asirin Asmani Aslon, Sherhan Aslon, Sawang Aslon and Sambri Kamlon Andon. They were brought to the military's Southern Command headquarters for interrogation.

Gidaya said government security forces also recovered two .45-cal. pistols, cellular phones, jungle bolos and documents from the Abu Sayyaf safehouse.

Finally neutralized

"Finally we neutralized the leader of this urban terrorist group of the Abu Sayyaf and we have preempted a much wider scale of terrorist attack in the peninsula," he told the INQUIRER.

Gidaya said the death of Alvarez and the "neutralization" of his group was an effort by "homegrown experts."

No foreigners involved

"No foreign troops were involved. Our units painstakingly built up information for almost four years," he said.

Gidaya said Alvarez was wanted for two bomb attacks at the Shoppers' shopping malls here on Oct. 17, 2002, that claimed several lives, another bombing at the Fort Pilar Shrine three days later, as well as the 2000 kidnapping of 53 students and teachers at a Roman Catholic school on nearby Basilan island.

Cafe bombing

Alvarez's group was also believed to be responsible for the bombing of a cafe near the gates of the military's Camp Arturo Enrile in Barangay Malagutay which killed five persons, including Sgt. Mark Johnson, an American soldier. Forty others, including another US serviceman, were wounded in that attack.

The Abu Sayyaf, thought to number some 500 militants, has been blamed for the worst terrorist attacks in the country, including the firebombing of a passenger ferry on Manila Bay in February 2004 that claimed more than 100 lives, and the kidnapping of Western tourists that led to the deaths of two American captives in 2001 and 2002.

Links to networks

US and Filipino intelligence officials have linked the Abu Sayyaf group to the regional militant network Jemaah Islamiyah and the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden.

Last week, two suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed during a clash with government security forces in Sacol Island here. *With a report from Ed General, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Controversial officer among 8 promoted

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION has approved the promotion of eight police officers, including a seasoned investigator who helped solve one of the country's most sensational murder cases but under whose watch a suspected international terrorist escaped from his cell. The promotions are subject to approval by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The promotion of Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza, director of the Philippine National Police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, signals the restoration of his superiors' confidence in him following the escape of Fathur Roman al-Ghozi and two other alleged terrorists from a heavily guarded detention center in Camp Crame three years ago.

Rizal Day bombing

Al-Ghozi, an Indonesian, had admitted involvement in the 2000 Rizal Day bombings in Metro Manila in which 14 people were killed and 91 others wounded. Versoza was chief of the PNP's Intelligence Group when Al-Ghozi escaped from its custody.

Apart from Versoza, who will become a police director, also approved for promotion to the rank of director were Chief Supt. Irving Malunda, deputy inspector general of the Internal Affairs Service, and Chief Supt. Servando Hizon, chief of the Directorate for Comptrollership.

Five senior superintendents will also become chief superintendents: Antonio Enteria Jr., regional director of the IAS; Chito de los Santos, executive officer of the Directorate for Research and Development; Van Luspo, director of the PNP Computer Service; Jaime Milla, chief of the Security Agency and Supervision Division, and Roberto Rosales.

Special promotion

Rosales was granted a special promotion for leading successful anti-narcotics operations in Quezon province, where he served as police chief, the Napolcom said.

The Napolcom also approved the hiring of 207 licensed criminologists who will join the force with the rank of police inspector.

A presidential fact-finding inquiry had cleared Versoza of charges of collusion in the escape of Al-Ghozi and his two companions. The probe blamed the escape on the incompetence of the guards and defects in the cells' locks and recommended the filing of criminal charges against seven officers.

Versoza is credited with solving the sensational 1993 rape and murder of Aileen Sarmenta and her friend Alan Gomez which eventually sent Mayor Antonio Sanchez of Calauan, Laguna, to prison as the crime's mastermind.

Still no trace of 11 missing off Palawan

NO TRACE HAS BEEN FOUND OF 11 PEOPLE reported missing on their way to Palawan in a boat nearly two weeks ago, the Philippine Coast Guard has said.

Spokesperson Lt. Commander Joseph Coyme said that as of yesterday, the PCG was still on search and rescue mode for the missing people who left San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, on March 31 in a motor banca and were headed for Coron, Palawan.

The 11 consisted of eight employees of M4 Construction and Maintenance Services Inc. and three crew members of the banca. M4 is a contractor of the telecommunications firm Smart Communications Inc.

Coyme said that, so far, no date has been set for ending the search.

"It would depend on those supervising the search and rescue operations," he said.

He said there was still a chance of finding the missing people alive, noting that in past operations the PCG was able to find people who had been lost at sea for longer periods.

Coyme also said M4 Construction has denied claiming that its employees had been kidnapped at sea.

He said he spoke with M4 president Leonardo Mercado, who told him no M4 employee had reported a kidnapping by pirates to authorities.

Coyme, quoting Mercado, said the kidnapping of the 11 people by pirates had been the topic of rumors in Mindoro.

But he said the PCG had yet to substantiate this.

"We have not received any proof of a kidnapping. If there had been a kidnapping, somebody should have received a ransom demand," he said. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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OPINION

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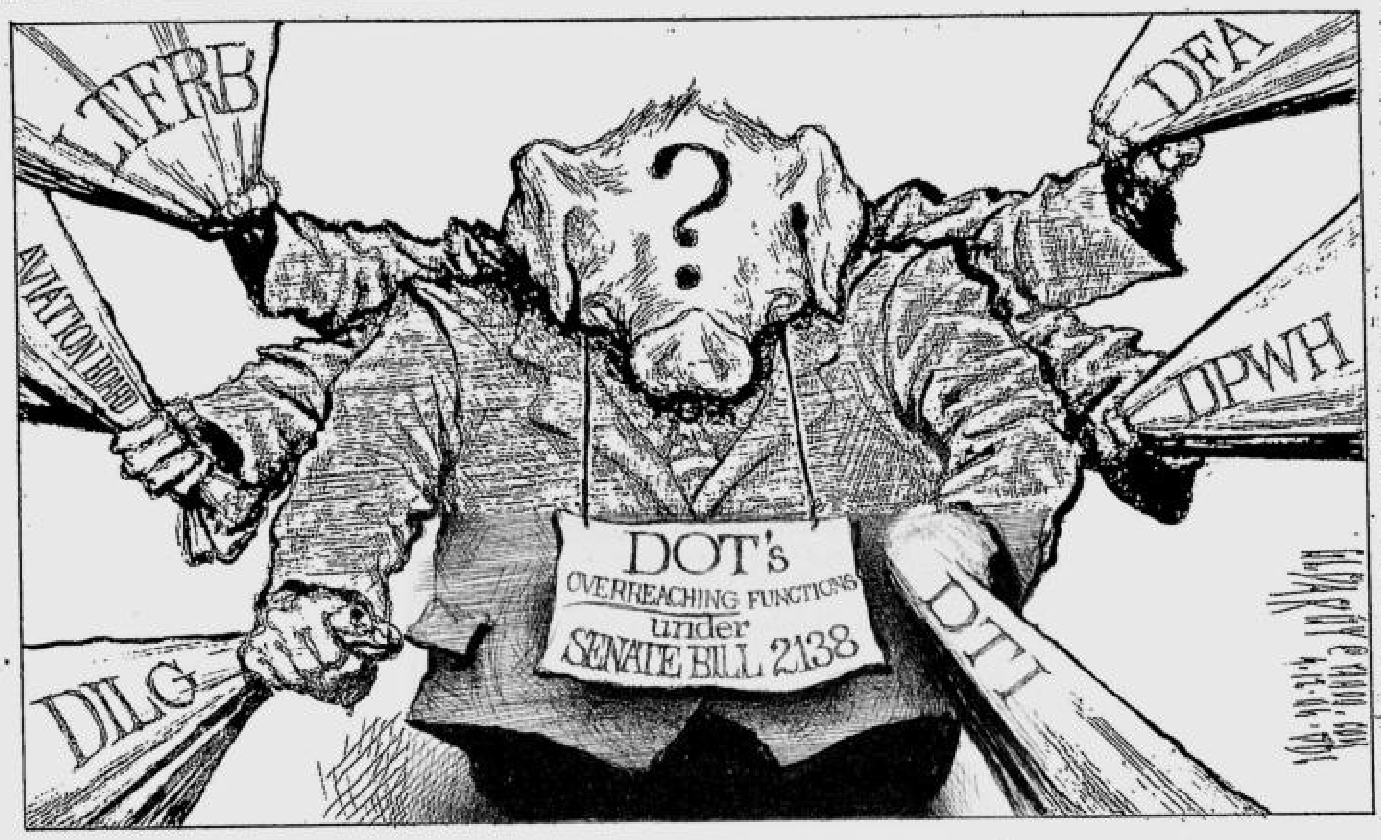


Love and sacrifice

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD COMMEMORATES THIS week its day of deepest gloom as well as its day of greatest joy.

EDITORIAL

More than 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, greeted by throngs that waved branches of trees and shouted "Hosannah!" ("Save us!"—which was also an exclamation of praise.) Five days later, the same crowd would shout "Crucify him!" at Jesus' trial. Found guilty, He would be crucified, would die and be buried. The week would culminate in His Resurrection, the most joyous event in Christendom.

The central themes of Holy Week are love and sacrifice. Christianity received the main commandment of its ethic from the Old Testament: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But Jesus Christ went further and joined together in a unique fashion the historic commandments to love God and to love one's fellowmen. He said that the first commandment is: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." He then added, "The second [commandment] is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself," thus making the second a corollary of the first. And again Jesus went further when He said, "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you."

During the Last Supper, Jesus told His disciples: "My commandment is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." And He did follow His own commandment, and laid down His life for his fellowmen.

God the Father sacrificed His Son to save humankind from its sins: "For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son that whoever believes in Him should not die, but have eternal life." And it fell to Jesus, as a man, to make the supreme sacrifice.

Being a man, Jesus did not want to suffer pain. "Abba, Father," He said at Gethsemane, "everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will."

Jesus knew that being the Messiah, "the Anointed One" of God, meant that He had to undergo certain sacrifices if He was to fulfill His Father's purpose. His Father had given him the cup and He had to drink it—a metaphor first seen at the Last Supper and that recurred in his agonized prayer at Gethsemane. Jesus was the Good Shepherd, and like any good shepherd, He had to lay down His life for His flock.

Jesus knew He had to undergo all kinds of suffering if He was to fulfill His mission on earth. To the very last, when He was nearly at the point of death, He refused an anodyne that a kind soldier offered him: wine mixed with myrrh to dull the pain of crucifixion. To the very last, He loved "His people," and loved even those who were slowly putting Him to death: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

These words, Thomas Carlyle said, were "the sublimest words that ever fell from human lips."

Jesus Christ lived a very short life of only more than 30 years and His public career lasted only about three years, but He has been called the greatest man who ever lived. No other man has so widely and greatly affected humankind. Historians and theologians say that Christianity, the religion that sprang up after Jesus' death, is a spiritual power that has influenced human history more strongly and changed it more deeply than any thing.

The climax of Jesus' life was his Resurrection. His crucifixion gave Christian believers a preview of the world to come. In suffering His Passion and Crucifixion, Jesus demonstrated more clearly and more strongly than any writing or sermon His lesson of love and sacrifice. He was the human manifestation of the self-giving, self-denying, self-sacrificing love of God's Son.

Brotherly love and sacrifice—these are two things that are now sorely needed in our world, a world filled with much hatred, enmity, violence and strife and greed, self-centeredness and selfishness. This week should be an occasion for us to ponder the lesson of Jesus' love and sacrifice.

Where did the Bible come from?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

HOLY WEEK IS THAT TIME OF THE YEAR when people find time not to whoop it up in resorts and vacation spots but also, sometimes, to pick up the Bible and thumb through it. Television and the movies show endless reruns of religious films, and people suddenly remember to go to church. Priests and preachers wax bombastic with their sermons. Always the subjects are the passion and death and teachings of Jesus Christ as told by the Bible.

This year, there are two new controversies involving the Bible: the best-selling novel "The Da Vinci Code" and the newly discovered "the Gospel of Judas," two silly exercises, if I may add. "The Da Vinci Code" is a novel, a book of fiction, and does not pretend to be accurate history. The author merely wove an interesting story around some historical facts, the same way other authors weave make-believe stories around historical figures and facts during World War II.

The "Judas Gospel" tells a story different from that told in the other gospels in the Bible. From being a heel, Judas is now a hero in the new gospel, not a betrayer but a loyal follower of Jesus. No doubt, these two controversies will continue to hound the Bible for years.

The Bible, the most widely read book in the world, is the only—if very sketchy—official biography of Christ and, in the Old Testament, the history of the universe from the day of Creation to the times of Jesus. But the Bible is neither history nor biography. The Bible is considered holy by many people who believe it came directly from God Himself and therefore take its words as "the gospel truth." Not true.

Unfortunately, different preachers of different religious sects have differing interpretations of "the gospel truth" although they all read the same texts. That is why many preachers and modern-day evangelists have made flourishing careers and have become rich from perorating on passages in the Bible. That is why followers of different religious sects, far from being united by the same God and His teachings, argue, bicker and criticize one another over their "wrong" interpretations of Bible passages, as though they were the only ones who could interpret them correctly.

Preachers of two religious sects waste the air time of two competing religious TV channels, day in and day out, ridiculing and trying to prove each other wrong and therefore spreading hate, instead of love as Jesus teaches, to their listeners.

Why does this happen, when they are all reading from the same Bible? Where did the Bible come from anyway?

There are many Bible study groups that have mushroomed everywhere. We long have many Catholic schools that teach catechism and religion to their students. But strangely, they never teach the origins of the Bible. Why?

Because when people learn the origins of the holy book, they will see that it did not come directly from God as widely believed, like God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. More truthfully, the contents of the Bible were written by mortal men, with their biases and prejudices, and were written many decades after the death of Jesus. None of the people listed as the authors of the different books witnessed the events that they chronicled.

The earliest of these was not written until after many decades after the Crucifixion. For many generations, the story of Jesus was told by word of mouth, from father to son, from mother to daughter, as the Christians waited for the Second Coming.

Many preachers and "prophets" embellished their own stories, not to mislead but to reinforce (in their opinion) the teachings and lessons of Christ. Something like "the end justifies the means."

When the many stories of Christ began to be written down centuries later, there was such a profusion of "gospels" that the Vatican saw a need to choose the most credible of these "gospels" and compile them. It created study groups of experts who spent a very long time going over the stories. Many apocryphal gospels were discarded. They finally settled on the gospels of Luke, Matthew, Mark and John. They are now the only official "biography" of Jesus Christ, very little of whom is written in the history of the Roman Empire or any other historical source. They now comprise a major portion of the New Testament in the Bible as we know it today. That explains the many contradictions in the Bible over which thousands of preachers have fulminated trying to explain.

That's not the only reason. The Bible has been translated into many languages, and translations necessarily include inaccuracies. Different words in different languages sometimes cannot convey the same shade of meaning in the original. Again, the result is contradiction and confusion.

In short, the Bible is neither the "word of God" nor the "gospel truth." It was not written by God. It is a compilation of stories told and retold for centuries and gathered together in one book. It can be compared to legends and folk tales of the Philippines, compiled in an anthology. The stories make interesting and valuable reading but they are neither history nor biography—nor accurate.

It is not wise, therefore, to argue with others on the passages of the Bible. You can be as wrong about them as you think they are. Contradictions, ambiguity and inaccuracies are built into the Bible because of its origins and the inexact craft of translation.

The best attitude is to live and let live. Let everyone be happy with his or her belief and interpretation of the Bible and not try to prove him or her wrong. After all, that is one of the principal teachings of Christ.

Again, alternatives

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

"BUT WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE TO GMA?"

Surprisingly, that question is still being asked today. As I keep saying, that's not the hardest question in the world to answer. It's the easiest.

To begin with, the question contains two wrong assumptions. The first is that in this person-oriented culture, you need another face or person as an alternative to GMA. That's not true at all. You need look no farther to see that than GMA herself, or what brought her to power, which was Edsa II. Edsa II was never a choice between Erap and GMA. Had it been so, Edsa II would never have happened. Edsa II happened in spite of, and not because of, GMA, GMA being the biggest obstacle to it. As a friend in the Erap government asked me then: Would you rather have GMA instead of Erap ruling us? I confess I was taken aback. GMA was, of course, the legal successor, but if the way she had comported herself in that campaign was anything to go by, not the moral one.

Edsa II happened because of a hope or dream, not a person. The hope or dream, as in Edsa I—although Edsa I was aided by a face, which was Cory's—that things could be better. The hope or dream that the collective force of civil society, the Church, business, the media and ordinary folk could bring back decency to a land ravaged by the lack of it.

The second fallacy, which is related to the first, is that the people who want to oust GMA want to do so simply because they do not like her face. Well, I guess some are motivated by that, though I can't say I blame them. There's something to be said about removing a face that launched a thousand plagues, and caused not quite a few deaths from *bugnot*. But, no, the problem is not the face, it is the principle.

As The New York Times shows those of us who can't see what's right under their noses, GMA isn't just a usurper, she is a dictator. Or is going there. She has, the Times observes, betrayed the spirit of Edsa, resurrecting the same evils Marcos unleashed: electoral chicanery, crony politics and intimidation of the media. The two are related. You are not the elected president, you have no recourse but to defend yourself from the outcry to vacate your post by naked force. Which brings us to the point: the choice is not just between GMA and no GMA, the choice is between democracy and dictatorship.

What is the alternative to GMA? Quite simply, (clean) elections.

By that, of course, I do not mean the one Fidel Ramos et al. are proposing, which is an election that includes GMA. That is stupid. GMA is the reason we need to have a new election—because she screwed the last one. Why should she be allowed to take part in the new one?

(Clean) elections answer completely the wrong assumptions, or fallacies, above.

First off, it answers the problem of an illegitimate ruler. The problem, to repeat, is not GMA per se, it is that GMA has no electoral mandate. The answer to an illegitimate ruler is a legitimate one. The answer to a president who has no electoral mandate is to have a president who does. It is not a face or person that is the alternative to GMA, it is a process. (Clean) elections affirm the most basic principle of democracy, which is that the voters and only the voters may choose the leader they want.

I don't mind if Noli de Castro wins in (clean) elections. If he's the one the voters want, so be it. That is what we have elections for, lest we have forgotten. We have elections so the people may choose whom they want to lead them. If the winner subsequently betrays their trust, as Erap did, then by all means let us remove him, or her, from power. I don't mind either having one Edsa after another if that is what it takes to get things right. If at first you don't succeed, try and try again.

Second, (clean) elections answer the problem of dictatorship. In fact it's not just GMA who's moving this country toward dictatorship, it's many of those opposing her, or indeed the public itself, if completely unwittingly so. You'll find that in the question I've been asked repeatedly by reporters and by audiences in forums: "But who do you want to replace GMA?" or, "Who is your alternative?" That question is a wrong one. Indeed, it is a most dangerous one.

It presumes that I am in a position to answer it. In fact, I have no right to say who should rule this country; you have no right to say who should rule the country. Only the people, through their votes, may say who should rule them. We're seeing precisely the dangers of that question in groups and individuals plotting to oust GMA by a coup and putting in her place their concept of what constitutes a "viable alternative." Nothing is viable that is not backed by the vote or People Power. Not in a democracy anyway.

(Clean) elections are the only viable alternative there is. All other alternatives simply usher us to a dangerous state of affairs where the elite or middle class, or their representatives in various organizations or institutions of society, may feel free to trot out the best person to lead this country and seize power for him. Which is what's happening now, many groups and individuals wracking their brains to see who or what can best be installed in place of GMA by force or farce. That is not democracy, however that is inspired and driven by the noblest intentions. That is tyranny.

I grant elections can just bring us back to where we were before GMA. But that is no mean advance from where we are now, which is a world without decency, which is an order teetering precariously on the edge of martial law. Elections are not unlike democracy itself which, as Churchill said, is a horrible system, except that all the others are worse.

Elections don't seem to offer much, except that all the others offer even less.

Davide report puts GMA on the spot

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS AFTER HE WAS APpointed presidential adviser on election reform, former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo last March 10 a comprehensive report embracing both constitutional change and electoral reform. Although the contents of the report have not been fully disclosed, except for some key themes published in the papers this week, what is of immediate interest to the public is his recommendation for a revamp of the Commission on Elections.

Davide, according to press reports, has impressed on the President the urgency of reforming the Comelec. He said in an interview, "It is not necessarily a total revamp but basic infrastructural change." He has submitted to the President a short list of six people "of integrity" for appointment as commissioners. He said, "I recommend them because I know that they are persons of integrity and character, competence, probity and independence which are the very criteria the Constitution also prescribes even for members of the judiciary. Their integrity is beyond dispute. I believe that they can really restore the credibility of the commission."

The high priority and urgency Davide has given to the Comelec revamp and electoral reforms are well-placed at this time when all attempts for political reforms, including those seeking constitutional change and the replacement of President Arroyo, have stalled and have, in fact, hit an impasse. He has correctly identified the priorities. He pointed out that the revamp is a reform measure that "should be in place before 2007," when the mid-term elections are scheduled.

The seven-member Comelec has two vacancies. But except for newly appointed Commissioner Rene Sarmiento, the holdover commission is enmeshed in the scandal over the presidential intervention in the commission, a presumably independent and politically impartial constitutional body, through telephone conversations with one of its commissioners, Virgilio Garcillano, during the 2004 election.

Few Comelec administrations since the time of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos have fallen into so much public disrepute and lost so much public trust as the Comelec now under Chair Benjamin Abalos. Davide's recommendation comes amid calls from a large sector of the public for the top-to-bottom overhaul of the Comelec, a clamor that is reflected by the Feb. 18-March 3 Pulse Asia survey showing that 52 percent of Filipinos favor the resignation en masse of the commissioners against the background of the political crisis generated by the Garcillano tapes.

Davide's report puts the President on the spot. When Davide accepted the appointment as presidential adviser on electoral reform, following his retirement as chief justice last December, he was criticized as having allowed himself to be used as window-dressing for an administration whose political legitimacy was being questioned. In submitting his report, and especially stressing the urgency of a Comelec revamp, David is demonstrating that he is not being used as a tool, that he is serious about his commission as adviser on electoral reforms and therefore proving his critics wrong.

Davide's recommendation puts pressure on the President to clean up the Comelec and makes it awkward for her to seek refuge behind the excuse that election commissioners cannot be removed except through impeachment. There is validity in the argument that the President can exert her suasive powers to make the commissioners resign. The Davide recommendation thus puts to a test the President's willingness to undertake electoral reforms as a necessary first step to regaining political legitimacy and to restoring public confidence in the Comelec and, indeed, the electoral system.

The prompt preparation of the report is vintage Davide. He is one of the few Comelec chairpersons whose administrations directed honest and non-partisan elections, and his recommendations are served well by his experience at the Comelec. The Davide Commission that looked into the attempted coups against the Aquino administration remains one of the authoritative studies on Philippine coup attempts.

His recommendation on electoral reforms, especially the revamp of the Comelec, cannot be more timely than now, when there's a continuing demand for a snap election to pave the way for the termination of the Arroyo presidency before 2010, and a campaign is under way to conduct a people's initiative to revise the Constitution, led by the administration.

Whether or not the initiative succeeds or the campaign for constitutional change leads to an election in 2007, electoral reform is a key element in restoring confidence in the electoral system as the framework of political leadership change.

When Davide refers to 2007 as the time for electoral reforms to be in place, he does not seem to have in mind the administration's timetable for the shift from presidential to a parliamentary system of government, a point when a new constitution has to be ratified and an election for members of parliament will be held. In any case, the Comelec revamp is absolutely necessary and urgent.

Among all the political reform projects now underway, nothing is more immediately achievable. The revamp is a necessary precondition to the reestablishment of the integrity and credibility of electoral democracy.

Testing the faith

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S JUST A CANNY PIECE OF marketing, but two controversies have exploded just as the Christian world was entering perhaps the most solemn (or supposed to be solemn) period of the ecclesiastical calendar.

One is the movie adaptation of "The Da Vinci Code," the best-selling novel by Dan Brown due to be released next month. The book created a sensation with allegations that, among other things, Jesus Christ had married Mary Magdalene, sired a child and founded a bloodline whose members have been protected through the centuries by a secret sect that includes, among others, Leonardo da Vinci.

The other controversy revolves around the surfacing of the "Gospel of Judas," 26 pages of a restored papyrus manuscript that has been authenticated by experts and dated back to 300 AD.

What has made eyebrows rise over the "revelations" of this newly revealed Gnostic gospel is that they are seen as "rehabilitating" the image of Judas Iscariot, the apostle who, according to traditional belief, betrayed Jesus and traded information on the Messiah's whereabouts for 30 pieces of silver. According to the document, Jesus talked with Judas a few days before He was arrested and told him: "You will exceed all of them," referring to the other apostles, "for you will sacrifice the man that clothes me."

"The man that clothes me" has been interpreted as the mortal body of Jesus, meaning that by setting in motion the events leading to the Crucifixion, Judas was carrying out God's will and indeed made possible the salvation of humankind. As a New York Times article asks: "Was Judas a betrayer or facilitator of salvation?"

* * *

FROM A LAYPERSON'S point of view, I don't know why the rehabilitation of Judas should threaten, as some claim, the very foundations of the Christian faith.

While the New Testament accounts say nothing of Jesus' valuation of Judas' status among the Apostles, the Gospel of John does quote Jesus implying a "divine" plan for Judas, when Jesus at the Last Supper took a piece of bread, dipped it in sauce and handed it to Judas, telling him: "Hurry and do what you must!"

If our faith teaches us that God is all-knowing and that nothing happens on earth without His knowledge and will, then it could be said that Judas indeed was merely fulfilling his part in the Divine plan.

But if we accept Judas' "innocence," would this not destroy the concept of sin—of personal responsibility for our own actions—as well as of the role of Satan in the thwarting of Divine intentions?

The "Gospel of Judas" would indeed seem quite in line with current thinking on "sin" and human frailty. These days, no one really commits a crime, does someone wrong, or sins. Everyone who's gone beyond the norm of acceptable and honorable behavior is not guilty but dysfunctional, with neuroses and childhood trauma used to explain sociopathic behavior and personal evil.

* * *

EVEN less should Dan Brown's novel and the movie which would make its contents even more accessible to a larger public, be taken as a challenge to our faith.

Brown, after all, has said repeatedly that the book is a work of fiction, a mish-mash of legends, historical tidbits and rumor. True, he says the basis for the book's central theory has been laid down by scholarly scrutiny and historical analysis. But the novel is a work of entertainment—intriguing and ripe for speculation—but entertainment just the same, and so fast-paced and unrelenting in its exposition that readers are willing to suspend disbelief.

But even if Brown's thesis about a carnal relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene—described by feminist theologians based on texts of the early Christian church as "the first among the apostles"—should prove to be factual and actual human descendants of Christ are discovered, does this necessarily endanger—again—the very foundations of our faith?

Jesus Christ chose to be "fully God and fully man." And if He had desired to share our lot, would He not have fully—and happily—embraced the human condition, including our carnal desires? Procreation, after all, is an essential part of being human, necessary for the continuation of the human race and the enhancement of human relationships. Would Jesus have chosen to live and suffer and die as a man, while abjuring the common human experience of sex?

Just asking.

* * *

BOTH the "Gospel of Judas" and legends on the true nature of the "Holy Grail" are part of what's been called the "Gnostic tradition," after an early Christian sect that published alternate texts to the "official" gospels adopted by the Council of Nicea.

The discoveries and revelations taken from these ancient texts, including the Dead Sea scrolls, says Elain Pagels, professor of religion at Princeton University, as quoted by The New York Times, "are exploding the myth of a monolithic religion and demonstrates how diverse—and fascinating—the early Christian movement really was."

Christ's divinity, the Blessed Virgin's virginity, the leadership of the Church, the teaching on celibacy for priests—all of these were under question and discussion in the years immediately after the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, even as the Christian church expanded and its membership exploded. Only with time, and with the solidification of spiritual and political power, would most of our central tenets be fixed and acquire the patina of authority.

But if we believe our faith is a living faith and dynamic and responsive to the times, we must be willing to have these tenets questioned and debated from time to time. For a faith that is not willing to be challenged or questioned is a fearful faith, timid and insecure.

Acts of charity

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

TEXTBOOK HISTORY HAS PAINTED SUCH A warped picture of the Spanish friar that we remember the misdeeds of a few bad eggs rather than the majority who laid the foundation of many of our towns, supervised the building of colonial churches, provided rudimentary health care, education and other social services, aside from propagating the faith. When you read the early friar accounts of the Philippines in the 17th and 18th centuries, you get a lot of fantastic miracle tales and self-serving stories of their accomplishments in the line of duty. Yet there are some things that move the reader.

Since this is a Holy Week column, I should take a break from heroes, humor and irreverence, and share some material from "Relacion de las islas Filipinas" by the Jesuit Pedro Chirino who arrived in the Philippines, according to his account, in 1590 and served in Balayan and Taytay in Luzon, Tigbauan in Panay, and Carigara, Leyte. In the course of his ministry, he traveled through and wrote about Mindoro, Marinduque, Samar, Bohol and even parts of Mindanao. One would wish that he wrote more about what kind of cultures he saw and encountered at the time because these would then form an ethnographic record that would help historians recreate Philippine society at the time of contact with the West. He described what people wore, gave a long account of bathing practices and even provided a glimpse into pre-colonial religion: *anitos, catalonans*, etc. There are so many crocodile stories here to fill numerous columns.

In Chirino's account, we see how the early Filipinos took to the missionaries and the new religion. There is a chapter on the finding of the Sto. Niño de Cebu, narrating how the image was venerated as an *anito* by the natives. From the time of Magellan's death in 1521 till its recovery many years later by another Spanish expedition, the Sto. Niño was invoked for safe childbirth and provided miracles galore.

Yet, one of the things that struck me was how some of the Jesuits moved people to convert by acts of kindness and compassion. Chirino wrote:

"These people are squeamish to a fault: they are offended and horrified by anything unpleasant to the senses, especially sight and smell, while on the other hand, they are captivated by pleasant tastes and odors and are curious to hear and see what is pleasurable. Consequently they have a repugnance for anything that has a bad smell and great loathing for persons who have sores or wounds, so that among them such persons endured great need and abandonment, both spiritual and temporal.

"We preached to them about this several times, but since it is undoubtedly difficult and heroic to achieve success in this respect and we saw that they did not benefit from out words, the preacher resolved to preach by deeds. There was a day set aside each week on which all the aged and sore-infested sick were assembled for instruction, but the priest knew that some of these did not show up because they had no one to bring them or help them come—particularly one woman, the slave of a certain chief, whose masters had never wanted to bring her to church because of the loathing they felt for her. And so when a great number of these unfortunates were once gathered together and the cream of the townspeople were present, the priest took hold of the feet of the poor slave who was badly ulcerated and kissed them, putting his mouth on the very wound. [*Ngek!*]

"Another man, who was the object of their derision and dared not uncover himself because the whole of his mouth and nose and most of his face had been eaten away by one great wound, he approached and caressed and conversed with face to face. This example made such an impression on them that from that time on, they have shown great compassion for these unfortunates, helping them in their needs and carrying them to church when they are unable to walk. This is precisely what one chief did with his slave woman, whom previously he had not even approached. And the ruler of that town, an Indian of very high rank and highly esteemed by his people, seeing that a repulsive old woman had no one to help her to church, took her upon his own shoulders and bore her there himself, heedless of the unpleasant smell or the sores or the soiling of the very fine robe that he was wearing that day. When some people, furthermore, tried to restrain him, he told them that he was merely fulfilling his Christian duty."

The above is something that we have seen in recent times in the life of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Perhaps if I read the other early accounts by Augustinians, Franciscans and Dominicans, I will find more of the same and again be edified. Too bad that I read these accounts for historical rather than spiritual purposes. Too bad that I take everything with the proverbial grain of salt. Maybe these accounts would make me a better person, if not a better historian.

At least I know that the much maligned friar in our history is but a caricature drawn by our heroes in the late 19th century and that there is possibly a positive story here waiting to be told to counter the simplistic bias of textbook history.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Quiet time

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

"*PAPANIS ANG LAWAY MO,*" A BOHOLANO FRIEND described what Holy Week was like for him when he was growing up. It was his way of describing how older Filipinos would impose a rule of silence around that time, and especially on Good Friday, a solemn and somber commemoration of Christ's suffering and death.

These days, I can't imagine a place in the Philippines where you still have that rule of silence. Some of the religious commemorations are still there, but by and large, Holy Week is a time for Filipinos to go off for a vacation: to Baguio, Boracay or, for the more affluent, abroad for fun, revelry, sometimes even bacchanalian debauchery.

Across all cultures, there's always provision for some kind of holy day (or days) for silence. Particularly striking are the Balinese, who celebrate their New Year's eve with a lot of noise but for whom New Year's Day itself, Nyepi, is a time of almost total silence. All electrical appliances are supposed to be turned off; the roads have no cars, no motorcycles; even the airport will take only transit flights.

In the Philippines, all our holidays are festive except, until recently, Holy Week, and now that quiet time is gone too. Sure, in principle, some of us will still try to tone down on Good Friday, but that still means retreating to our homes . . . to watch cable TV. Local stations will try to come up with some kind of semblance of religious observances by televising a church service, or showing old films with some vaguely religious theme, but these days, you can get around that watching DVDs.

We Filipinos fear silence much more than many of our neighbors. Buddhist and Hindu countries have strong traditions of meditation. Islam has its month-long Ramadan of fasting and reflection. We once had a quiet Holy Week, and that's gone now, so we just move from one noisy celebration to another in a holiday-filled year.

There's no time now for reflection, for introspection, and I wonder at times if that might be one reason we have so many problems. Without being able to take stock of our lives, as individuals and as a nation, we move around aimlessly, living, literally, for the next holiday.

Walking with trees

I'm not proposing that we move back into my friend's rancid-saliva season. Neither am I suggesting that we all meditate through the week. There are other ways to create quiet time.

We need first to filter out a rather noisy world: cable TV, stereo systems, the tricycles and jeepneys running by. You could join the exodus out of Manila and other urban areas, but I've tried that before and found the mad rush in bus stations and airports only gets everyone grumpy and cranky. Stay put in the city and you'll find it might actually be easier to find quiet—just make sure you avoid the television, the DVD player, maybe even the computer and the world streaming in through the Internet.

Then find some activity to calm the spirit. You might find it in gardening in your home. Or you might need to go out and look for an oasis. We still have a few of them even in Metro Manila. The Balara watershed area is one. Too "wild" for an urban cowboy? Then try some of our campuses, like UP and Ateneo.

I'll share a little secret here: I combine tree-walking with meditation at UP. No need to sit in the lotus position and gazing up at the trees. There's something called walking meditation where you empty the mind by just walking about. And at UP, you can actually walk with the trees.

No, I haven't turned New Age; no, I don't believe in levitation, or out of body experiences. I simply choose any one of UP's older buildings—Quezon Hall, Palma Hall (AS to older people), Malcolm with its resident ghosts—go to one of the upper floors, and walk down the corridors to take in the scenery, including quite a few trees.

I've written in the past about how the month of May produces a riot of colorful flowers. But it was only this year that I realized March and April produce their own early crop of flowers—on trees. Too urbanized, too caught up in the din of modern life, we've forgotten to look up to the trees.

Palma Hall has all these kalachuchi trees that bloom throughout the year, but beyond the visual delight they offer, you'll find that you have to learn to be quiet enough to catch the scent of the flowers. Filipinos have mixed feelings about kalachuchi, sometimes associating it with the dead, but in many other cultures, the kalachuchi has much more positive connotations: of home and hearth, of female sustenance.

I'll save the life-giving kalachuchi for another column, but for today I wanted to alert you to a whole family of trees, the giant relatives of beans or legumes, that flower during the summer. You'll find them even in Metro Manila, from the nuanced delicate colors of the acacia, to the resplendent yellow blooms of the golden shower. This year, I began noticing another kind of yellow flowering tree, the yellow flame tree (for my biologist friends, this is *Peltophorum pterocarpum*).

This tree's flowers are more subdued than the golden shower so from afar, they provide an impressionist touch, flashes of yellow on an otherwise bleak urban landscape. There's a particularly awesome example in between UP's Main Library and the Palma Hall Annex (the psychology department). For those looking at other campuses, you'll find still fairly impressive examples on the Miriam and Ateneo campuses.

Bring a digital camera and capture some of those trees for posterity. At the rate we're going with environmental pollution, we just might lose these trees in a few years, and the next generation of Filipinos may have to content themselves with the photographs.

What should be

I have the psychology department's yellow flame tree as my computer wallpaper theme right now, and friends have asked about it, some even thinking it was taken abroad. Which is telling. We associate placid and serene landscapes with other countries, rarely with our own.

Quiet time allows us to tune in to what's here, what's around us. Even in our backyards, in our blighted cities, nature struggles along, teasing us with moments of fleeting splendor: plants you never knew existed, until they flower; birds you might never see, but which try, almost defiantly, to remind us they exist by singing out.

Quiet time slows us down and allows us to savor life to its fullest. Try creating quiet time by preparing a slow meal: it may take longer to prepare, longer to consume, but you'll find the food tastes much more like, well, food that nurtures the body, the mind, the spirit.

Similarly, as we quiet down this Holy Week, realizing how restful it is to have a relatively quieter, car-free, less-crowded city, we might better appreciate the need to craft a vision of what Manila, Cebu, Davao, the Philippines should be or, better still, could be.

Literacy not a mark of quality education

ONE OF THE PHILIPPINES' biggest problems is a huge uneducated population. It may be true, as surveys claim, that 92 percent of Filipinos are literate, meaning, they can read and write. But it doesn't necessarily mean that a person who can read and write is one who is properly educated or has received quality education.

In Manila, I usually see a lot of children, begging for money or selling *sampaguita* in the streets. This makes me ask: Why are they not in school? Why are they working at a very young age? They are supposed to be studying and playing in this stage of their lives.

The fact is most Filipinos live in poverty and the government doesn't have enough money to support them or provide them quality education through the public schools. Our public school system lacks books, classrooms and teachers. Around 13 municipalities don't have high schools and 4,234 barangays don't even have public elementary schools. Many public schools have to accommodate 60 to 120 students per classroom, making a good learning environment impossible for them to have. With the population increasing at the rate of 2.3 percent per year, there is no telling how many more students each classroom will have in the next few years.

How about the children who do not attend school anymore?

Quality education plays an important role in the future of nations. Especially now that the world has become very competitive. It's almost impossible for a person to land a decent job without education.

The government should invest more in education. Then we will have better qualified government officials, who will be chosen by an educated electorate based on what they can do for our country and not on their popularity.

At the same time, pollution will be minimized since an educated people will be more open to the waste management scheme of "reduce, reuse and recycle."

Also, an educated citizenry will also likely help regulate population growth. Some people say that the bigger the population the stronger a nation becomes because it will have a bigger work force.

Sustainable development will become more attainable for us. But then, what if the people don't have proper education and, therefore, will not qualify for work?

—BYRON WANG,
byronaw@mydestiny.net

Inept economist without conscience

MELVIN GASCON'S STORIES about mining in Nueva Vizcaya painted a picture, albeit small, of what seems to be the most recent fashion in the Philippine countryside. For those who are not aware, Cagayan Valley has become one of the country's most sought-after mining areas.

A number of the region's towns (and still counting) have already their share of FTAAs (Financial or Technical Assistance Agreements) for mining. As a result, mining activities (exploration, excavation and extraction) have literally swept away vast tracts of lands—in the lowlands and mountains—that much earlier have been made productive by the sweat and blood of debt-ridden farmers.

There's mining for copper and gold (aside from magnetite) in Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino; and for magnetite in the shores of Claveria, Cagayan; and for coal in central Isabela. The latter, which was even proudly endorsed by former Gov. Faustino Dy Jr., is persistently being pushed by the PNOC-Exploration Corp. despite strong opposition from various sectors, including peasant groups.

It is truly despicable that the Arroyo administration is too eager to sell our natural resources to foreigners. This is comparable to a prostitute offering his/her body and soul to anybody just so he/she could buy food for a day or two, unmindful of the consequences.

But the sellout of our patrimony is far worse. Here, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo isn't selling herself but the rights and welfare of our long-impoverished people—this while she enjoys the privilege of fortune and power that are not hers to begin with.

Besides, it has been shown, even in First World countries, that economic gains derived from mining and logging are actually insignificant compared to the extensive damage the destruction of nature wreaks upon the lives, livelihood and property of people in the affected areas.

To say it bluntly, GMA is an inept economist with no conscience. Now she dances the Cha-cha and persuades us to join her. If we look closer, what she and her cohorts really want to remove from our Constitution are the provisions meant to protect the country's natural reserves and labor force from plunder and abuse by foreigners.

Then again, how many times has it also been pointed out that it is not the nationalist provisions in our Charter but greed and blind obedience to imperialist dictates that are stunting our country's economic growth and keeping more than 90 percent of Filipinos in grinding misery?

The decision of the Supreme Court upholding the "constitutionality" of the Mining Act is a big slap on our nation's face. It only further shows how our so-called "leaders"—under GMA's guidance—are leading our people to jump off a cliff.

Let us get rid of GMA before she causes more irreparable damage to our beloved country.

—TRINA R. OLIVAREZ,
Gabriela/Save The Valley, Serve
The People Alliance for the
Environment Cagayan Valley,
Baligatan, Ilagan, Isabela,

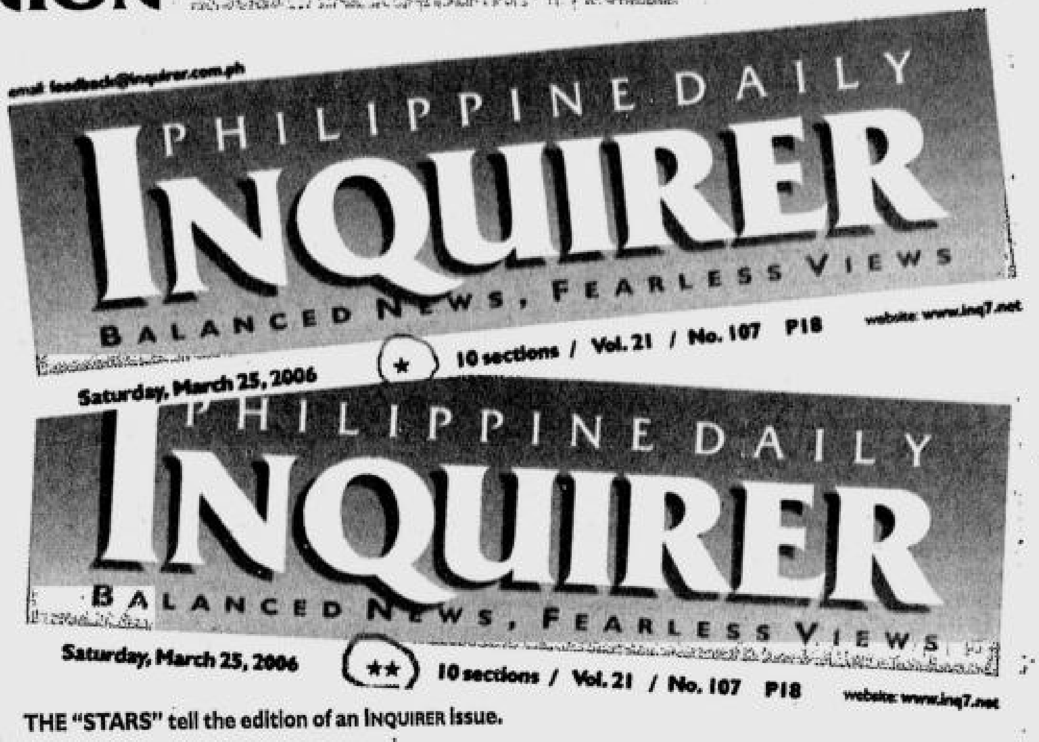
Much ado over Kison's statement

I WONDER WHY THE INQUIRER'S March 17 editorial, as well as some of the nation's learned critics and opinion-makers, particularly those in the Senate, magnified and gave a different meaning to Col. Tristan Kison's statement that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is "one of the strong pillars holding (up) the nation" and that "if we break, the nation will collapse."

I do not know the colonel in person, but I trust that he and his superiors, peers and subordinates recognize the supremacy of civilian authority over the military. Thus, since he did not refer to the AFP as "the" pillar, he must have been thinking of the other equally important pillars that this 75-year-old observer has in mind: the Constitution and pertinent laws, the judiciary, the executive and legislative branches of government in general, law-enforcement agencies like the Philippine National Police, the great majority of our people who may be silent but law-abiding and peace-loving, the religious sector in general and other supporters of democracy and freedom.

As for the colonel's subsequent comment, he may have likened the nation to something on a platform held up by pillars. It is not hard to visualize that should one pillar break, the platform will become unstable, hence it is likely to fall down. I can only wonder what will happen to our country if the AFP is suddenly disbanded in the event that Congress reduces its budget to zero.

—BRIGIDO DOMINGO,
gido8ph@yahoo.com



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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, March 25, 2006 ★ 10 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 107 P18 website: www.inq7.net

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THE "STARS" tell the edition of an INQUIRER issue.

Inquirer's front page changes and later editions

MEMBERS OF MY STAFF AND I were surprised to see two copies of the March 25 issue of the INQUIRER with different banner headlines: "Bernas: They are desperate" and "Political trick or vox populi?" On the other hand, the uppermost parts of those INQUIRER copies did not indicate the editions (of that March 25 issue) to which each of them belonged.

We also noted the change in the authorship of the article following the lead article, "Bernas: They are desperate"—from multiple authors to only one. And more, some of the items in the "Bernas" article got into the "Political trick" article.

It may be good for the INQUIRER to consider the style of many newspapers throughout the world where there is a note as to the edition at hand such as "Early Edition" and "Late Edition," and the like. Also, the INQUIRER should exercise some care in attributing the authorship of articles.

—WILLIAM H. KREUTZ, S.J.,
president,
Ateneo de Zamboanga University,
La Purisima Street,
7000 Zamboanga City

The difference in the headlines had to do with the change in the lead of the banner (main) story.

In the first edition—please note one star directly under the logo—the headline was "Political trick or vox populi?"

In the second edition—two stars—the story was rematted to lead off with the Bernas interview with the INQUIRER as well as to make way for a late-breaker that had to do with an SWS survey showing GMA's approval rating as "still down" but not as bad.

Thus, the byline (Norman Bordadora) in the first edition had top billing (among four other reporters' names) in the second edition because his story on the Bernas interview was merged with, or incorporated into the main story. In fact, Bordadora's interview became the lead of the banner story as noted earlier.

The second edition of the INQUIRER—even a third edition, etc.— which, incidentally, entails extra printing costs—allows the editors to accommodate breaking news stories/photographs that deserve Page 1 treatment. The later editions also afford us editors—working under the tyranny of deadlines especially in the early editions—the time (if barely) to rethink our choice and presentation of Page 1 stories and to reflect on their significance and impact (if any) on the life of the nation.

Rethinking the first edition of the March 25 issue, we were moved (we like to think by the Holy Spirit) to reflect on the Bernas opinion as the best of all possible leads in order to alert our readers to the very real legal obstacles to a people's initiative to change the Constitution, which were being ignored, it would seem, by the rabid proponents of Charter change.

Thanks to the unblemished reputation of Bernas as a constitutionalist and his moral authority as a man of the cloth, we believe we succeeded in our objective. You have to be proud as a Jesuit that one of your own is a man so well regarded, and not just by the INQUIRER, that we had to revise the first edition to place his opinion prominently, i.e, the banner lead and head. And never mind the extra cost. He's a man for others to guide them—and us guys in the INQUIRER—from the dark shadows of the state of the nation into the light.

Father Kreutz, thank you for raising your concerns as doing so gave us a chance to explain the often inexplicable process (even to us sometimes) of how the INQUIRER, every single day, tries to bring the news that matters in our lives.—**Editor in Chief**

The least DFA can do for Filipino illegals in US

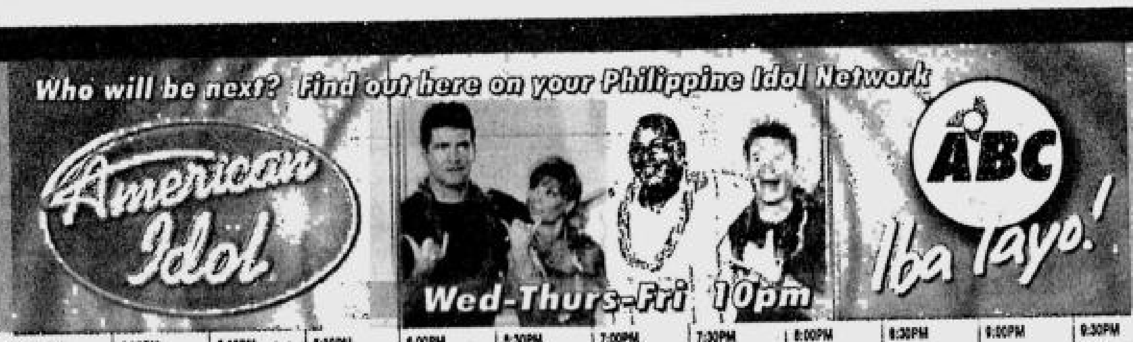
THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE news story headlined "Come home now 'na,' DFA tells Filipino illegals in US." (PDI, 4/1/06)

For a government that continuously promotes overseas employment for its own workforce, and prides itself of benefiting from OFW remittances, its call for the suffering migrants to come back home is, to say the least, very insulting.

Come back home for what? So OFWs will have to feed their families with endless politicking? For most (if not all) OFWs, it was the lack of job opportunities back home that drove them away from their loved ones. If the government cannot provide them the opportunities, the least that Department of Foreign Affairs can do is to shut up.

—ARNEL SERRANO,
cfc1994@aol.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Wednesday, June 12, 2006


Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
Iba Tayo!

Provided by ClickTheCity.com
For more TV schedules:
1. Visit www.ClickTheCity.com or wap.clickthecity
2. Key in CTC TV and send to 2303 for Globe and to 225 for Smart. P2.50 per SMS

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)	National Geographic	PBA				Sentro
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World
AXN		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Next Action Star		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		Sakura Wars	Sakura Wars
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Camp Lazlo	Coconut Fred's Fruit Salad Island	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Cinema One		Miss Philippines				St. Rita			
Cinemax	The Blues Brothers				Boeing Boeing (4:40 PM)				The Boys & Girl From County Clare
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport
Crime/Suspense		The Closer		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence
Discovery Channel		Zero Hour		American Chopper		Building The Winter Games		Great Quakes	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	[illegible]	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 [illegible] Champs		Pool World Pool Masters 2001		Asian X Games Presented By Kia		Motorsport Asia	Table Tennis '04 [illegible] Champs
ETC		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover
EWTN	St. Thomas More, Faithful Statesman	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Faith In Motion	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Suffering And The Love Of God	EWTN Catholic Classics	The Church & The Poor: Building Bridges
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto	
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royal Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	[illegible]	24 Oras	
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV		Finding Buck McHenry				Bewitched	The Nanny
HBO	Baby: Wings Of Change			Walking Tall 3: Final Chapter				The Enemy Within	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Angelic Layer	Tokyo Underground	Metal Fighter Miku	Beyblade G-Revolution
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Heat		Velocity		X-Men	Street Smarts
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped
MTV Philippines		Laguna Beach		MTV Screen	Pop Inc.		2006 MAA Nominees Specials	MTV Hits	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXILOG	MYX Finals	Star MYX
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Hunter Hunted		Interpol Investigates		Science Times		Top 5	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		[illegible]	[illegible]	Teledyaryo W/ [illegible] & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie
PBO			Batang Kabayo 4				Payaso		
Qtv	[illegible]		Zenki	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Mona		Love At Aegean Sea
RPN 9	TV Shopping					Global Window		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping	
Solar Sports						All England 2006 Men's Singles		SMB Poker Bar Tour Finals	NBA Jam
Sports Plus	Golf Today	Arena Football						SMB Poker Bar Tour Finals	
Star Movies		Bulworth			On Her Majesty's Secret Service (4:45 PM)				
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		American Idol		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle
Studio 23	Bewitched	Masked Rider Ryuki				Batman Beyond		Bones	TBA

Channel	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Billboard On-Air	
ABS-CBN 2		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Princess Lulu		S.O.C.O.			Insider
AXN	PSI Factor (Season II)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	The Amazing Race (Season IX)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		CSI: Miami (Season III)	
Cartoon Network	Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		Powerpuff Girls		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One	Sugatang Puso			Persona	Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang				[illegible] Lamang	
Cinemax			Lethal Dose			Wyatt Earp (9:25 PM)				
CNN	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Heat				Bones	
Discovery Channel	Wild Discovery		Hour China		San Toku		A Haunting		Stormproof	
Disney Channel	That's So Raven That's So Trendy Week	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon	Buzz on Maggie	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	2006 Kaohsiung World Pool Champ		Sportscenter Asia		Sportscenter Asia	Classic Boxing: [illegible] Early Years		Classic Boxing: [illegible] The Fights And [illegible]		Sportscenter Asia
ETC	The Tyra Banks Show		Veronica Mars 2		Beauty & The Geek		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Mother Angelica Live Classics		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9:15 PM)	One In Their Hearts: Heroes Of Priesthood	Parable	Rome Reports	EWTN Presents	
Fox News	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace		Nuts Entertainment			Sekai
Hallmark Channel	Family Law III		Missing II		Judging Amy		Scar Tissue			Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO		Saints And Soldiers			Patch Adams				The Myth Of Fingerprints	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Angelic Layer
IBC 13	Home Shopping Network		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Up Close And Personal		Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Med TV			My Name Is Earl	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special		Style Star	Martha		Fine Living Special		Intimate Portrait	
MTV Philippines	Get Spotted	Get Hitched	MTV Screen	Fashionably Loud	TRL		Laguna Beach		MTV Hits	
MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Wow!		About Asia		[illegible]		Hunter Hunted: [illegible] Man Hunted By Sharks		Interpol Investigates	
NBN			Teledyaryo Final Edition				[illegible] With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO		Mandurugas				[illegible]				Misteryosa
Qtv	Irene	Now!	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	Now Na!		News On Q	Balikbayan		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9	Iron Chef		Three Wishes		Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Money Talk	Kerygma
SBN 21	Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports	Bagupaan	Boxing: Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Judah	Sportsdesk					Sportsdesk	Asian Badminton C'ships	
Sports Plus	NBA Game Golden State @ Lakers					NBA Game Mavs @ San Antonio				
Star Movies	Mr. 3000 (7:10 PM)				Solo			The Distinguished Gentleman		
Star World	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	American Idol		Grey's Anatomy		Smallville		Seinfeld	American Idol
Studio 23	Wazzup Wazzup	The Amazing Race Family Edition		CSI (8:20 PM)	24 Season 4 (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

TV special plants Judas kiss on Catholic Church

From page A1

scholar but she's biased for feminism," said Aparicio, who trained at the renowned Ecole Biblique et Archeologie in Jerusalem.

"Scholars like her promote a critique of the Church as monolithic and patriarchal. They want pluralism, but Christianity cannot just be any which way you want it to be."

Aparicio said the Gospel of Judas and other Gnostic writings such as the supposed Gospel of Mary Magdalene were excluded from the final canon of the New Testament not because the Catholic Church was trying to silence other Christian groups, but because their authenticity and fidelity to the teachings of Christ were suspect right from the start.

"There are guidelines for canonicity," Aparicio said.

"They included apostolicity or paternity from the apostles; that the books should be promoted by the big churches and big communities; they should be universally accepted, and they should be consistent with doctrine."

Filling gaps

He said none of the Gnostic writings and "apocrypha," lost or hidden books purporting to show the hidden life of Christ or fill in certain gaps in his life, fulfills the criteria.

Aparicio, who handles a course on the Synoptic gospels at the UST Ecclesiastical Faculties, explained that canonization, in which the Church selected the books that would comprise the New Testament, or the scriptures of divine revelation, was a long drawn-out process. Across the centuries, the Gnostic gospels and the apocryphal writings were consistently rejected as incompatible with Christianity, he said.

THE TRADITION CARRIES ON. A familiar sight along the highways and byways of the country during Holy Week are the penitents who walk long distances bearing their cross. LYN RILLON

Knowledge as salvation

He said the questionable writings emerged because of "the need of ordinary Christians to know certain unknown details about Jesus, such as his youth," and also because some "heteredox Christians wanted to justify their beliefs."

Aparicio explained that Gnosticism was not compatible with the Christian faith because it promoted self-knowledge (*gnosis* is the Greek word for knowledge) as the sole basis of salvation. "Even St. Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians was already critical in his time of certain Gnostic tendencies which were inimical to the Gospel. To the Catholic Church, salvation involves both knowledge and practice."

He said knowledge as salvation is in fact promoted by the Gospel of Judas, in which Judas Iscariot, the apostle whom the Bible said betrayed Christ to his persecutors and killers, is portrayed as divinely appointed to do so by Christ himself in order to fulfill the design of salvation.

In the National Geographic special, a dramatization of the Judas codex has Jesus telling Judas in confidence that his star would shine the brightest for turning over the Christ to his death.

What TV special didn't say

What the TV special does not say, according to Aparicio, is that the Gospel of Judas was promoted by the "Cainites," an ancient Christian sect that defended the role of Cain in the design of salvation.

Cain, in the first book of the Old Testament, Genesis, was the first son of Adam and Eve after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In a fit of sibling jealousy, Cain slew his younger brother, Abel, in what the Bible says was the first murder committed by mankind.

"Judas Iscariot was considered a saint by the Cainites," Aparicio said.

The Gospel of Judas and the sect of Cain, therefore, were guilty of "determinism," for showing that Judas's betrayal and Cain's murder had been predestined as part of the design of salvation, Aparicio said.

Excuses Judas

In effect, the Gospel of Judas excuses Judas for his act of betrayal because it had been determined from early on, the Dominican scholar said, "contrary to what the Church teaches that man has free will."

In contrast, the other apostles, whom Christ had predicted would abandon him, "prevaricated" and in fact left him, but repented later on.

"They did not fall for determinism or predestination," Aparicio said. "They acknowledged their failings."

Request for balance

Because the Gnostic gospels contain dangerous implications for Christianity, Aparicio called on the National Geographic and the popular media to be accurate, objective and balanced in their presentation of the controversial texts.

In the special, a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission was quoted only toward the end of the two-hour presentation as saying that the books of the New Testament should be accepted by Christians as a matter of faith.

Send them to jail, says Pimentel

ONE MAN WHO DOES NOT agree with calls for a revamp of the Commission on Elections is Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Jr. He wants the poll commissioners to be charged in court, instead, for their role in the voided P1.3-billion automation deal.

"The call for a revamp of the Comelec is, you might say, a very mild cure for a cancerous ailment that affects the Commission on Elections," Pimentel said in a press briefing.

"And revamping them out of office will be rewarding them for gross negligence and corruption in the running of that very vital agency."

Charge them

Pimentel suggested that Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and the commissioners who signed the questionable automation deal with a Korean consortium be criminally charged.

"I don't agree with that (revamp), they can be charged criminally, even while they are there. That has been my position," he said. "My solution is to put all of them in jail, because of the misdeeds that they have done against the Filipino people."

For starters, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez should file charges against Abalos and the other commissioners for their role in the voided deal, the senator said.

"But legal procedures would probably be meaningless unless the people back up these procedures. Therefore, the people should be shouting and demanding that these people be held to account for their misdeeds in connection with the holding of the elections and the modernization of our electoral process," he said.

On Pimentel's motion, a bill now being crafted by senators to automate the elections bars the Comelec from using the counting machines it procured through the voided deal.

'Unless impeached, we can't be replaced'

From page A1

In Baguio City, where he is on a Lenten retreat with President Macapagal-Arroyo and other Cabinet officials, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said a revamp of the Comelec could not be done by the executive branch because the poll agency was a constitutional body.

"The executive branch cannot encroach upon the Comelec and there is a procedure. It's only by impeachment that members of the commission can be changed," Ermita said.

He said this was why he couldn't say if a revamp was among the recommendations of Davide.

A constitutional body

While he knew Davide submitted six names, he was clueless on their identities, except for one—human rights lawyer and former Undersecretary Rene Sarmiento of the Office of the Peace Process.

Asked whether Ms Arroyo could just fill up the vacancies in the Comelec instead of undertaking a revamp, Ermita said it was "very difficult to say revamp because ... Comelec is a constitutional body."

"We have to respect the fact that it's a constitutional body," Ermita said.

Abalos said the six reported nominees could possibly just be for the existing two vacancies in the seven-member Comelec leadership panel.

"The six names are a part of his short list of individuals he wanted the President to choose from to fill up two remaining vacancies in Comelec," Abalos explained.

"When there is a vacancy to be filled, the appointing authority should have several names to choose from, hence, a list of nominees. But ultimately, it is the President's prerogative whom to appoint," he added.

ABALOS: Only structural reforms

DAVIDE: Six nominees

Unless he and the commissioners resigned or were removed by impeachment, Abalos said there was no way they could be replaced.

"Being a former chair of Comelec himself, the ex-chief justice knows that commissioners have fixed terms mandated by the Constitution."

Interviewed on radio dzMM, Abalos branded as "very unfair" the report that Davide wanted the Comelec revamped.

Only structural reforms

"He did not want a revamp, only structural reforms to address the problems we've been having so that the people's doubts on the results of our elections would be erased," Abalos said.

In a separate television interview, Abalos said what Davide had recommended was a "structural revamp."

Abalos said the electoral reforms recommended by Davide sprang from discussions they had.

"We had a consultation with him soon after he was appointed presidential adviser and we discussed structural reforms in the Comelec that would bring about greater efficiency in the disposition of cases, and greater effectivity in ensuring the credibility of elections," Abalos said.

He said that among the reforms discussed was the restoration of the representation of the dominant majority and minority political parties on the boards of election inspectors.

Another was to speed up the disposition of election-related cases, which are often filed in local courts first before they are elevated to Comelec divisions and the en banc.

Abysmal levels

The Comelec's reputation has sunk to abysmal levels following allegations of the involvement of some commissioners in the alleged anomalous purchase of automated counting machines worth P1.3 billion and the "Hello Garci" scandal involving a supposed conspiracy between Ms Arroyo and former Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to tamper with the results of the 2004 presidential election.

Ms Arroyo and Garcillano have denied the allegations.

A recent Social Weather Stations survey showed 52 percent of Filipinos want the Comelec commissioners to resign. The Senate also called for their resignation after uncovering alleged irregularities in the automated machines scandal.

Opportunity for GMA

"The Comelec needs radical surgery or abolition," said Rep. Jesli Lapus, former chair of the House committee on suffrage.

"Will PGMA [President Arroyo] finally seize this opportunity to straighten up Comelec?" asked the Tarlac lawmaker, a stalwart of the Nationalist People's Coalition wing allied with the House majority.

Other administration lawmakers supported Davide's proposal, saying the poll body was tainted.

They, however, stressed that reforms should be accompanied by changes in other strategic positions and mechanisms "to effectively regain the people's trust in the Comelec and the country's electoral processes."

Follow rule of law

In a joint statement, Representatives Salacnib Baterina (Lakas) and Eduardo Zialcita (Lakas), both members of the committee on suffrage and electoral reforms, said a Comelec revamp was "timely and necessary" in preparation for the planned plebiscite on Charter change and the 2007 elections.

Due process

Baterina, however, pointed out that every step of the structural reforms must follow the rule of law.

"We can't just make heads roll and disregard due process just because critics have made a monster out of the Comelec through their smear campaign," he said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Tel. # 221-9400

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Davao City Water District, with the Approved Budget for 2006 intends to apply the sum *(see schedule under 2)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under contracts as listed below. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
2. The Davao City Water District now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the following:

PACKAGE	DESCRIPTION	Approved Budget for the Contract	Bid Security (1% OF ABC)	Cost of Bid Documents
1	Various Cast Iron Fittings	P 3,802,500.00	38,025.00	2,000.00
2	Various sizes of G.I. Fittings	722,284.50	7,222.85	1,000.00
3	Various Brass Fittings	2,579,000.00	25,790.00	1,500.00
4	Various Gate Valves	805,000.00	8,050.00	1,000.00
5	Various sizes of P.E. Pipes	482,685.60	4,826.85	1,000.00
6	Various sizes of uPVC Pipes & Fittings	13,398,200.00	133,982.00	4,000.00
7	Softwares	824,650.00	8,246.50	1,000.00
8	1 set – Computer Network Firewall Appliance	650,449.00	6,504.50	1,000.00
9	Network Attached Storage	600,000.00	6,000.00	1,000.00
10	17 units – Personal Computers w/ different specifications	983,450.00	9,834.50	1,000.00
11	2 sets – Computer Aided Design and Drafting Software w/ complete user's Manual or Guide	500,000.00	5,000.00	1,000.00
12	2 sets – Chlorine Regulator	300,000.00	3,000.00	1,000.00
13	Microbiological Laboratory Supplies	746,000.00	7,460.00	1,000.00
14	Wall Mounted Chlorine Dioxide Generator System	600,000.00	6,000.00	1,000.00
15	Liquid Chlorine	5,083,200.00	50,832.00	2,500.00
16	Supply labor & matls. for General Reconditioning & Rehabilitation of one (1) unit Ford F600 Truck including installation & Mounting of Drill Rig assembly & other conversion & Fabrication Jobs.	300,000.00	3,000.00	1,000.00

The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *Davao City Water District* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. up to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of non refundable fee in the amount *(stated in item no. 2)*. The method of payment will be on Cash Basis. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The *Davao City Water District* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on ***May 3, 2006 at 9:00 o'clock A.M.*** at ***DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City.***
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before the ***bidding scheduled time and date at 9:00 o' clock A.M.*** All Bids must be accompanied by a ***Bid Security*** in the form of *Cash or Manager's check* in the amount *(stated in item no. 2)*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be at the ***DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Dvao City on the following schedule:***

PACKAGE NO.	BIDDING SCHEDULE, TIME & DATE
1 & 2	May 15, 2006, @ 9:00 A.M.
3 & 4	May 15, 2006, @ 2:00 P.M.
5	May 16, 2006, @ 9:00 A.M.
6	May 16, 2006, @ 2:00 P.M.
7, 8 & 9	May 17, 2006, @ 9:00 A.M.
10 & 11	May 17, 2006, @ 2:00 P.M.
12 & 13	May 18, 2006, @ 9:00 A.M.
14 & 15	May 18, 2006, @ 2:00 P.M.
16	May 19, 2006, @ 9:00 A.M.

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

9. The *Davao City Water District* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Davao City Water District
BAC-A
J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City

Tel. No.	221-9400 (6000)
E-mail add	dcwd@davao-water.gov.ph
Fax No.	224-5392
Website	www.davao-water.gov.ph

(Sgd.) VIRGINIA S. MARIMON
BAC-A Chairperson

(PDI – April 12 & 19, 2006)

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

A Lenten journey to Central, North Luzon

AS THE NATION PAUSES THIS week for the Lenten break, people start to leave Metro Manila to spend Holy Week in destinations that would rejuvenate their body and soul.

Central and Northern Luzon, the regions nearest and more accessible to the capital, offer various destinations for people who would want to take time off from the pressures of urban living.

INQUIRER correspondents in Northern and Central Luzon compiled some of these pilgrimage destinations to guide people who want to find a sanctuary where they can recharge their spirits and strengthen their faith.

CANDON City in Ilocos Sur commemorates the Holy Week with a parade of saints. LEONCIO BALBIN

Central Luzon

Pampanga. Seven old churches in Pampanga make fitting destinations for the Visita Iglesia on Maundy Thursday.

Their being long-standing monuments to the Catholic devotion can give the commemoration of the *visita*—the vigil of the Apostles as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane—a more authentic journey of faith.

The route, suggested by the Department of Tourism, hops from the Santo Rosario Parish in Angeles City, Metropolitan Cathedral in the City of San Fernando, Santa Monica Parish in Minalin, San Guillermo Church in Bacolor, Santiago de Galicia Parish (Betis Church) in Guagua, Santa Lucia Parish in Sasmuan and to the oldest of them all, the San Agustin Parish in Lubao.

These churches were built under the supervision of the Augustinians who spread the faith from Pampanga—the province created by Spain at almost the same time as Manila in 1571—to the rest of Central and Northern Luzon.

Pampanga also stages the Via Crucis (Way of the Cross) in San Pedro Cutud village in the City of San Fernando. The village has drawn local and foreign pilgrims to watch penitents reenact Jesus Christ's passion, crucifixion and death on Good Friday.

IN BAGUIO City, the faithful honor an image of the Virgin Mary in the Lourdes Grotto in Mirador Hill. EV ESPIRITU

Nueva Ecija. Barangay Olivete in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija, is a popular Lenten destination for people seeking spiritual rejuvenation and healing.

Pilgrims gather at the Sambahan ng Amang Kaama-amahan at Inang Kaina-inahan's "New Jerusalem." The religious sect's shrine has a chapel on a hill at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountain range and a spring that members call "Ilog Jordan (Jordan River)."

Mario Saad, barangay captain of Olivete, says one of the highlights of the pilgrimage is the sect's procession on Good Friday, where participants walk barefoot on the 2.3-km stretch of the village's dirt road.

"This village is a sight to behold on the night of Good Friday. The feeling will be something spiritual when you watch the long line of people participating in the procession," Saad says.

Nueva Ecija also offers its bigger churches for the Visita Iglesia. Among them are the Divine Shepherdess Shrine in Gapan City, and the Catholic churches in the towns of Sta. Rosa, Sto. Domingo and Talavera, and the cities of Cabanatuan, Muñoz and San Jose.

Tarlac. The village of Barangay Dolores, located west of Tarlac City, celebrates the feast of its patron saint on a Friday immediately before Good Friday (during Viernes Dolores, as Catholics call it). Their patron saint is Mater Dolorosa, one of the many names that the Blessed Virgin Mary is called.

Home to this village is a natural spring, a rarity in a landlocked province like Tarlac. From this spring comes cool water believed to be miraculous that has drawn many a faithful to the area, especially during the Holy week.

Ilocos

Pangasinan. The Nuestra Señora de Manaoag Church in Manaoag town in eastern Pangasinan is one of the top spiritual centers in the country. Believers swear about miracles that occurred in their lives after praying to the Our Lady of Manaoag, an image of the Virgin Mary.

People from other provinces and other countries flock to the town not only during Holy Week but even during ordinary days when Masses are held several times a day. The town is usually a jump-off point for tourists on their way to the Ilocos provinces and Baguio City.

Another pilgrimage destination is the Our Lady of Rosales Shrine in Rosales town. President Macapagal-Arroyo boosted its popularity as a pilgrim site due to her regular visits there.

Pilgrims may also visit the Santuario del Señor Teroso in Calasiao town, perhaps the only religious shrine in the country being managed by the local government and a foundation. The image, which believers say is "growing" through the years, is housed in a building near the town hall.

In western Pangasinan, there's Surip in Bani where the town's version of Calvary Hills is located. The 1,000-step Via Crucis passes through a forested area and leads to a giant cross atop a hill overlooking the green hills and South China Sea.

La Union. Foremost among the religious sites visited by tourists and pilgrims in La Union is the Agoo Basilica where the Our Lady of Charity (Apo Caridad to Ilocano devotees) is enshrined.

On Good Friday, a religious procession of life-size statues depicting the Stations of the Cross starts from the basilica and winds through designated processional roads in the town.

The procession features 29 *carrozas* (carriages) carrying life-size statues and other fixtures depicting the passion and death of Christ.

Local men pull each *carroza* that is followed by candle-bearing devotees.

On Maundy Thursday, the stage play "Golgotha" will be performed at the Jose D. Aspiras Civic Center across the basilica.

About 40 km to the north is San Fernando City, where the Pindangan Ruins is located. Pindangan (which means a place for drying fish) was a settlement during the Spanish era, where an Augustinian priest, Fr. Jose Torres, built the St. William Church.

The church was later transferred to its current location near the city plaza and is now known as the Cathedral of St. William the Hermit, seat of the Diocese of San Fernando. The Pindangan Ruins is 3 km from the the city plaza.

North of San Fernando City is the coastal town of Luna where the Church of Catherine of Alexandria is located. Built in the center of the town (formerly called Namacpacan), the church houses the image of Our Lady of Namacpacan ("Apo Baket Who Fed People" in Iloco), patroness of Ilocano travelers.

Ilocos Sur. The Visita Iglesia in Ilocos Sur begins in Sinait town near the Ilocos Norte border. The Sinait Church or the Shrine of Santo Cristo Milagroso is deceptively simple but it may have the most historical relic in the province.

It houses "Apo Lacay," a statue of the crucified Christ, which, according to accounts of old residents there, was found floating near the shore in Darangay Dadalaquiten together with the La Virgen Milagrosa de Badoc in the 17th century.

According to old residents, the two images chose to stay where they are now. During a pestilence in Vigan centuries ago, Apo Lacay was brought there and the outbreak ceased.

Equally miraculous is the statue of St. Vincent Ferrer in San Vicente town. Aside from the church's cornices (a molding at the corner between the ceiling and the top of a wall), the church features an old ornate wooden altar.

The Church of St. William the Hermit in Magsingal town is also a must-see for pilgrims for its wooden altar divided into eight niches.

The more than 400-year-old Church of San Juan de Sahagun in Candon City was done in the earthquake baroque style. The Sta. Lucia Church is architecturally interesting because its dome was done in the Renaissance style. It also houses the statue of the "Dark Virgin."

The Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion Church in Sta. Maria town was designated a national historical landmark in 1993. It was built on a hill and after climbing the 83 steps toward the church, one can view a panorama of the town.

St. Paul's Cathedral in Vigan City replaced a small wooden church erected in 1574 under orders by the *conquistador* Juan de Salcedo, who established Ciudad Fernandina (the old Vigan). Also in Vigan is the Simbaan a Bassit (small church), which is an old cemetery church.

Ilocos Norte. The Department of Tourism has identified at least eight town parishes as pilgrim sites that are worth visiting this summer.

Milagros Gonzales, provincial tourism officer, says except for the Badoc Church which is home to a blessed religious image, most pilgrim sites are known for their cultural and historical import.

Four churches are found in the province's southern towns of Badoc, Batac, Paoay and San Nicolas; two are in the eastern towns of Sarrat and Dingras while the Bacarra Church is in the northern section. The Laoag Cathedral is at the heart of the capital city.

To those coming from the southern section, the first stop is the Badoc Church named after its patron saint John the Baptist.

The Badoc Church is also home to the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary (La Virgen Milagrosa de Badoc) with the infant Jesus wrapped in her arms. The wooden image of La Virgen Milagrosa is also the patroness of the Laoag Diocese.

Also included in these sites are the Batac Church established in 1586 (Immaculate Conception Church), the San Nicolas de Tolentino Church in San Nicolas town and the St. Andrew the Apostle Church in Bacarra.

While the Paoay Church in Paoay town is best described as a world heritage site, locals revere the world icon with piousness because of its miraculous beginnings.

Inside the church is a chamber of French saint Roch (San Roque), a patron against pestilence and sickness.

Oral history says the image of San Roque was found in a well in 1820 when the townspeople were afflicted with a plague. Those who drank from the well were cured. The well, declared as a shrine in honor of San Roque, still stands in Barangay Sangladan west of Paoay Church.

A landmark in Sarrat town, the Sta. Monica Church features a 137-meter nave that is the longest in the country, according to the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Encyclopedia of Philippine Art.

Locals consider the St. Joseph Parish Church as the single most important structure in Dingras town. Formerly known as *rurog* (ruins), the Dingras Church was restored through the collective efforts of local residents and those abroad.

The last pilgrim stop is the St. William Cathedral, in honor of Laoag's patron saint, William the Hermit. It was said to be the first religious edifice and one of the biggest churches that the Spaniards built.

Cagayan Valley

Cagayan. The ancient brick churches of Cagayan, once the seat of the Catholic Church in Northern Luzon, provide pilgrims a peek into the deep influence of the Catholic Church in the lives of the native Ibanag and Itawes.

Topping the Holy Week destinations in the province is the Iguig Calvary, a five-hectare rolling land where pilgrims retrace the 14 Stations of the Cross. The area features concrete life-size images that feature the suffering and death of Christ.

Another popular stop for pilgrims is the St. Peter's Cathedral in Tuguegarao City. Its patio is a small version of the St. Peter's Square in Rome that features 14 framed images of the Stations of the Cross.

Pilgrims are also drawn to nearby Peñablanca town where a chapel is built inside a chamber of the Callao Caves.

The Basilica Minore of the Our Lady of Piat in Piat, Cagayan draws a steady stream of pilgrims and tourists for the miracles attributed to the image.

The churches of Amulung, Gattaran, Lallo and Camalaniugan are also popular stops for pilgrims and tourists alike.

Camalaniugan is home to the oldest church bells forged in Asia in 1595.

Isabela. Catholic devotees in Isabela have started visiting the Stations of the Cross at Dariok Hills in Santiago City.

The Chapel of Transfiguration in the area offers pilgrims an area to pray and meditate.

"Aside from its ambience as a religious site, it is also a place for meditation and soul-searching. You can commune with God and nature here," says Mayor Amelita Navarro.

Isabela also hosts ancient churches that devotees can visit. Among these are the Shrine of Our Lady of the Visitation in Gamu town; the Tumauini Church (parish church of St. Mathias built in 1753 and completed in 1805), which is made of clay and bricks; and the ancient churches of Alicia and San Pablo towns.

Nueva Vizcaya. An annual Lenten activity that is fast gaining popularity in Nueva Vizcaya is the *senaculo* that is regularly performed on Bangan Hill in Barangay Vista Alegre in Bayombong town.

The hill, which has been called "Nueva Vizcaya's Calvary," has become an ideal site for the Holy Week presentation, as it is within the 13-hectare Bangan Hill National Park.

Thousands of Catholic devotees who troop to the site every Good Friday are treated to a play that is performed through songs, dances, poems and declamation pieces by about 50 characters portraying the procession through the Stations of the Cross and the crucifixion of Christ on Mount Calvary.

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CARP door opened for Luisita workers

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—DEPARTMENT OF Agrarian Reform officials in Central Luzon on Tuesday agreed to the demand of Hacienda Luisita workers to be involved in the validation of potential beneficiaries of lands within the sugar estate.

Thirty leaders of the United Luisita Workers Union (Ulwu), representing over 5,000 farmers at the Cojuangco family-owned estate in Tarlac, clinched the agreement during a three-hour dialogue here.

Ulwu demanded to be part of the process after complaining that DAR teams did not coordinate with union officials.

"Most of those that they seek out for interviews are barangay captains and officials of BARC (barangay agrarian reform councils) many of whom are partial to the management or to the Cojuangcos," said Rene Galang, Ulwu president.

The lands are scheduled for distribution in June.

Teofilo Inocencio, DAR regional director, and Alfredo Reyes, DAR provincial chief, gave Galang until April 20 to submit the union's master list of proposed beneficiaries.

In DAR's master list are names of beneficiaries of the stock distribution option scheme that the government revoked in December last year, or after more than 10 years, to give way to actual ownership of the property by farm workers.

Ulwu officials were also allowed to participate in the verification work by DAR teams in 10 villages covered by the estate in Tarlac City, Concepcion and La Paz towns.

Joseph Canlas, chair of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon, said the final list of beneficiaries should exclude those who did not support the strike that saw 14 leaders and members killed since November 2004.

Inocencio said the DAR has the final say on who would qualify beneficiaries based on the criteria set under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Reyes served the notice of CARP coverage of Hacienda Luisita on Jan. 2.

As of last week, Inocencio said the lots at the estate have been "all accounted for."

This means that the copies of all the land titles have been obtained from the Register of Deeds.

DAR records showed that the estate totaled 5,938.1 hectares. Of these, at least 4,873.8 has. were eligible for CARP. Another 1,025.6 has were cancelled while 38.57 has were used for roads and canals. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

3 gov't men killed as NPA rebs raid outpost

PAGADIAN CITY—TWO MILITIAmen and a soldier were killed when dozens of communist rebels stormed an Army detachment in Sapang Dalaga in Misamis Occidental early morning Tuesday.

The attack was the second in Sapang Dalaga in less than a month.

On March 20, rebels also raided the police station of Sapang Dalaga and took several firearms, including handguns.

Col. Johnny Corcha, commander of the Army's 101st Infantry Brigade, said those manning the detachment in Barangay Upper Bautista on Tuesday were caught by surprise when the guerrillas swooped down at about 4:30 am.

"It was raining heavily when they staged the raid," he said.

Corcha said during the raid, a militiaman and the soldier died on the spot. He said the third government fatality was among five militiamen earlier rushed to the hospital for varying degree of injuries.

The identities of those killed and wounded were still being withheld pending formal notice to their families.

Corcha said the rebels also suffered four fatalities but not a single body had been recovered.

He said the dead rebels were carried by their retreating comrades.

Col. Gominto Pirino, group commander of the Army Reserve Command in Pagadian City, said the rebels took off with several firearms, including an M60 machine gun, 12 Garand rifles, two M14 assault rifles and two M16 rifles.

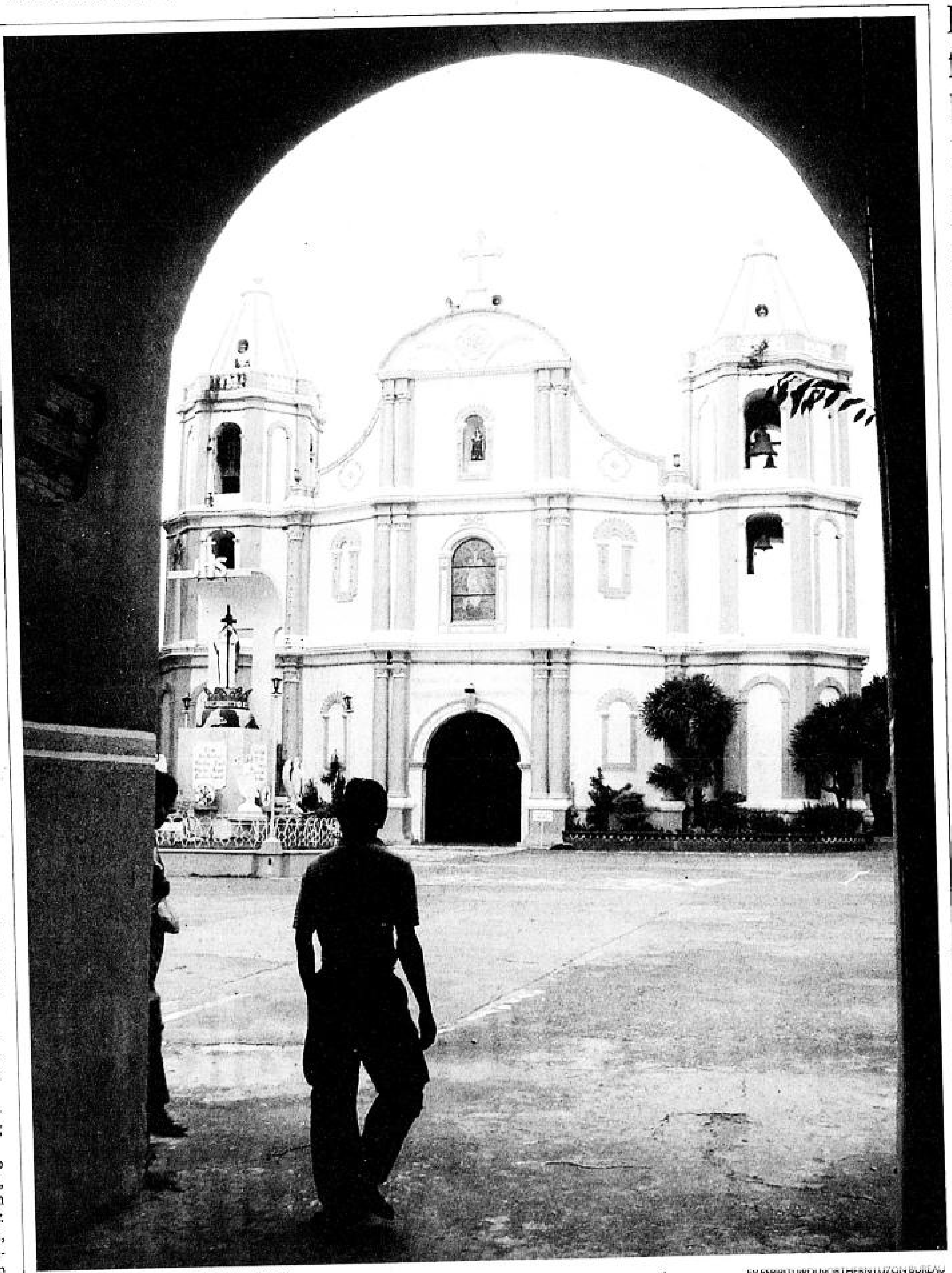
"It's a great loss," Pirino said.

The Philippine Air Force confirmed sending helicopters after the raid but said it was not for an aerial assault.

Officers of the Southern Command said soldiers are pursuing the guerrillas.

The NPA in Southern Mindanao said contrary to a military claim, no rebel died in last week's clash in Paquibato district in Davao City.

Col. Francisco Simbajon, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the NPA suffered at least 10 casualties in the clash. *Hernan de la Cruz and Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

WHERE ALL ROADS LEAD TO
A church in Namacpacan in Luna, La Union is framed by an arched entrance. Soon, the church grounds would be teeming with the faithful in observance of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Black Saturday, three of the holiest days of the Catholic religion.

NBI upholds findings vs brothers in Iloilo slayings

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has upheld the results of a police investigation that tagged the sons of an Iloilo businessman as suspects in the killing of their father, stepmother and half-sister.

In a 10-page report dated March 16 and submitted to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez Sr., the NBI Western Visayas regional office said there was "no convincing and substantial evidence" that would alter the findings of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) against Archie and Jan Michael Tan.

The CIDG earlier filed two counts of murder and a count of parricide against the brothers for the Jan. 8 killing of their father Francisco "Bobby" Tan, stepmother Cynthia Zayco-Tan and their six-year-old half-sister Katherine.

The case is undergoing preliminary investigation at the Iloilo City Prosecutors Office. The Department of Justice earlier issued a hold departure order against the two boys.

The victims were found dead with multiple stab wounds in the chest at the two-story family mansion in Molo District at dawn on Jan. 9.

Tan was found dead in his bed in the master bedroom, Cynthia in Archie's room, while Kathy was found at the doorway of her parent's room.

The brothers are Tan's sons from a previous relationship. The slain couple has five children who are now staying with their mother's family in Kabankalan town in Negros Occidental.

The report, signed by lawyer Mario Sison, NBI acting regional director, gave weight to the testimonies of three children of the slain couple that Archie, 20, and Jan Michael, 18, bore a deep grudge against Cynthia because she had always admonished the two brothers for "acts of imprudence and foolishness."

Catanduanes college closer to becoming state university

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTAtives has approved on third and final reading a bill upgrading Catanduanes State College (CSC) to a state university.

Under House Bill No. 4915, authored by Rep. Joseph Santiago of Catanduanes' lone district, the CSC will become the Catanduanes State University to be governed by a new board of regents.

CSU would be the country's 42nd state university and Bicol's third. It would have two campuses—one in Virac, the capital of the island-province of Catanduanes, and one in the town of Panganiban.

CSC has eight colleges, over 10,400 students and nearly 400 academic and non-teaching personnel.

Apart from Santiago, those who pushed for the new state university were Representatives Rolando Andaya Jr. of Camarines Sur, Cynthia Villar of Las Piñas City, Jesli Lapus of Tarlac, Harlin Abayon of Northern Samar and Herminio Teves of Negros Oriental.

The bill will now go to the Senate for its approval.

Santiago, meanwhile, said in a statement that the country's 113 state universities and colleges (SUCs) received a budget of P15.5 billion in the P1-trillion General Appropriations Act for 2006 that the House passed last week.

The outlay for SUCs will cover spending for personal services, maintenance and other operating expenses, and capital outlays.

On top of the national government subsidy, Santiago said SUCs have been authorized to retain internally generated income.

The country has 41 state universities and 72 state colleges and institutes.

NBI probe awaited on fish scare in Sorsogon

LEGAZPI CITY—OFFICIALS ARE awaiting the start of the investigation on what started a fish scare in Sorsogon that is turning out to be the result of false reports blaming two mine spills from operations of the Lafayette Philippines Inc. (LPI).

The NBI has sent subpoenas to several individuals just as Vice Gov. Antonio Escudero was quoted in earlier reports as admitting that it was he who put out the report on the contamination of fish in Sorsogon as a result of the LPI mine spills.

"As a public official, it was my duty and obligation to inform the people of what was going on so that they are warned of the possible dangerous effect it (mine spill) may cause," said Escudero on March 22, according to a report of the Philippine News Agency.

The reports spread in November last year and alleged that fish in Sorsogon waters were contaminated with high levels of mercury as a result of the LPI mine spills.

NBI investigation

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Sorsogon has said it was awaiting the NBI investigation, but Escudero appears not to take the board action seriously, saying "for me, it was nonsense."

In an interview April 11, Escudero said he was willing to be investigated by the NBI adding that he has enough documents to support his report that high mercury levels from the mine spills contaminated fish in his province.

In its resolution, the provincial board requested the NBI to investigate the accusations of some local government officials in Sorsogon that their counterparts in Albay were getting bribes.

Albay officials, led by Vice Gov. James Calisin, told Sorsogon officials to let the investigation run its normal course.

In October last year, two mine spills marred the operations of LPI in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

The second spill allegedly contained cyanide.

Blamed

Local government officials in Sorsogon, led by Escudero, blamed the Rapu-Rapu mining project for the contamination of Sorsogon waters and fish allegedly with mercury.

But at least six tests made by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the University of the Philippines-Natural Sciences Research Institute had found the mercury issue a hoax.

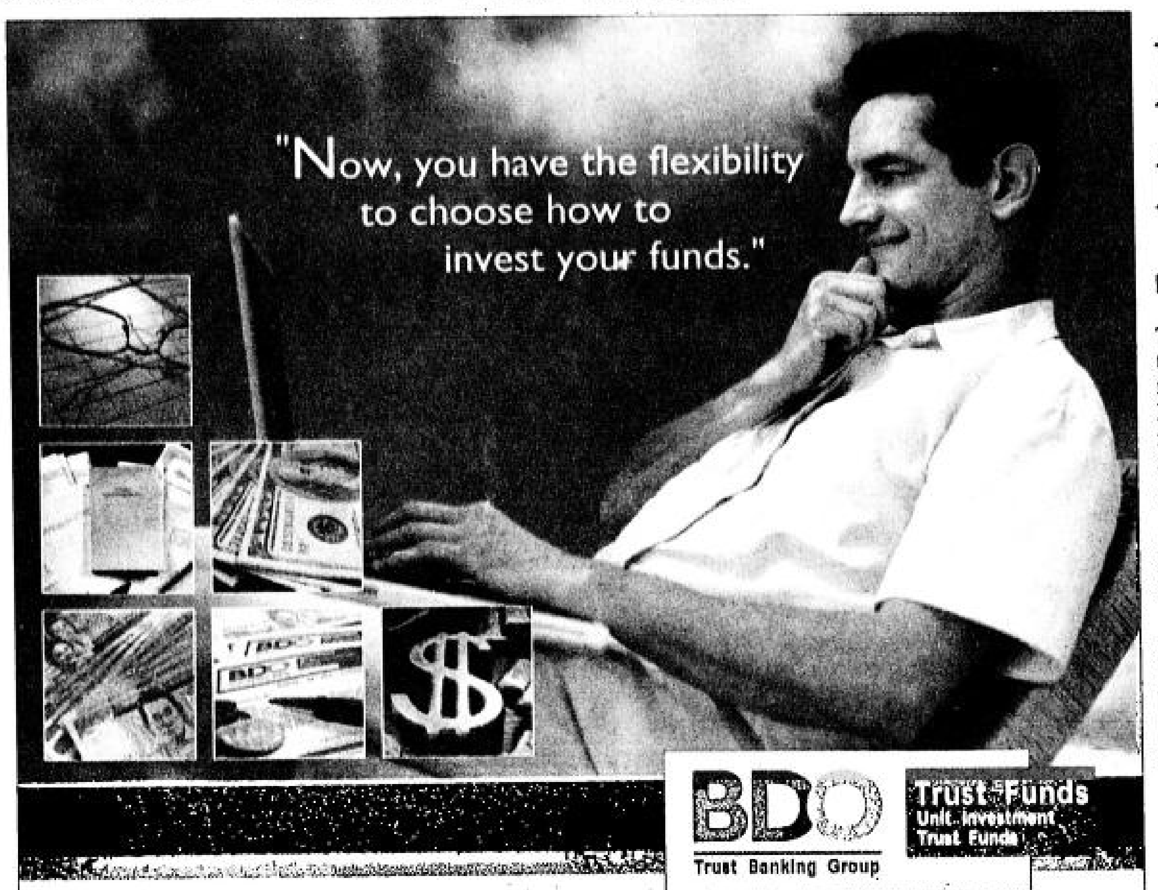
According to an LPI statement, fish that were found contaminated with mercury were brought to the BFAR by unidentified persons.

Questionable

BFAR's findings on these questionable fish samples were used by antimining groups to claim there was mercury pollution in Sorsogon and that the company was to blame.

Following the BFAR and UP-NSRI tests, the SPA had asked the NBI to find out who submitted the fish samples to BFAR and to file charges against those who fanned the hoax in the neighboring province.

LPI has been awaiting permission to resume operations temporarily to test whether or not the safety measures it has put in place in its mine site were going to work. *Edgar Alejo and Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*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We find ways

BDO BANCO DE ORO

Refund P28M to power firms, Napocor ordered

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ORDERED the National Power Corp. (Napocor) to refund several power distributors more than P28 million for illegally increasing power rates in the guise of penalties without the approval of the Energy Regulatory Board (ERB).

In decision penned by Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, the high tribunal said only the ERB had the power to determine and approve power rate increases.

"The power to determine, fix and prescribe rates being charged customers is vested in the ERB. Therefore, unless it gives prior approval, the penalties cannot be imposed by Napocor," the court said in a 23-page decision released yesterday.

Napocor's petition denied

The court's decision, in effect, affirmed the Court of Appeals ruling denying Napocor's petition which had sought to reverse the ERB order of Dec. 20, 1995, directing the state-owned power firm to refund the complainants.

The high court threw out Napocor's contention that the ERB's jurisdiction to fix, set and determine rates did not include the authority to overrule the imposition of penalties stipulated in the contracts of sale and delivery of power with distribution utilities.

The case emanated from a complaint filed by members of the Philippine Electric Plant Owners Association (PEPOA), a non-stock corporation composed of private electric plant operators, before the ERB on Dec. 15, 1995, where PEPOA took Napocor to task for the alleged unauthorized collection of rates in the guise of penalties for excess consumption and unused consumption of power.

Cease and desist order

On Dec. 20, 2005, the ERB ordered Napocor to cease and desist from collecting the penalties and on May 12, 1998, the ERB rendered a resolution ordering the state power firm to refund its power distributors, specifically Angeles Electric Corp., Visayan Electric Co. Inc. (Veco), Cagayan Electric Power and Light Co. (Cepalco) and Tarlac Enterprises Inc. (TEI).

On March 3, 1999, Napocor appealed the ERB decision before the appellate court, which ruled on March 3, 2003, that the imposition of penalties by Napocor was tantamount to an increase in rates that required ERB authorization.

The CA then voided the imposition of the penalties since Napocor failed to seek the ERB approval.

Authorization not required

In its petition for review, Napocor maintained that the imposition of penalties on its power distributors did not require authorization by the ERB and that the cease and desist order of the ERB without prior notice and hearing was illegal and not within the latter's authority.

But the court said Republic Act No. 7638 transferred to the ERB Napocor's power to determine, fix and prescribe the rates being charged customers.

The court also said the ERB had the authority to issue cease and desist orders even without a notice and hearing.

Tax deadline moved to April 17

SINCE APRIL 15 FALLS ON BLACK SATURDAY this year, the deadline for the filing of income tax returns has been moved to April 17 for both individual filers and corporations or those firms whose fiscal year ends on Dec. 31.

Under the law, failure to file one's income tax return by the prescribed deadline is punishable by a 25 percent surcharge and 20 percent annual interest based on the amount of tax payable.

Banking hours at selected branches have been extended to 5 p.m. up to April 17 to accommodate taxpayers and ITR filers.

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END of the road for suspect De Guzman.
RYAN LIM

'Pajero lady' back in jail

Rob suspect caught in the act by house owners

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NEARLY 10 MONTHS AFTER GIVING prison guards the slip, policemen yesterday recaptured Lourdes de Guzman, also known as the "Pajero Lady," in Makati City.

The 52-year-old De Guzman was arrested after the owners of a house on Mars Street in Bel-Air Village came home unexpectedly and caught her inside the house, stealing their valuables.

De Guzman was dubbed the "Pajero Lady" for using the vehicle to gain entry into posh subdivisions. Once inside, she would trick the house help into letting her in and then rob the owner.

"It was really her time. The owners only happened to return to their house because they decided not to push through with their travel plans," said Makati police chief, Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio.

The police said businessman Jose Ching and his family had left the house on Monday evening for the airport where they were to fly to China. No one was at home as the family's house help had been allowed to spend the Holy Week in their home province.

Change in plans

However, due to a mix-up in their flight plans, the Ching family was not able to leave. When they arrived home at around midnight, they found De Guzman inside their house.

"They were able to overpower her. There was a scuffle, then they called the police and we responded shortly after," said Valerio.

The police found out that De Guzman had arrived in the subdivision on board a Toyota Innova (plate number ZBK 938) sporting an access sticker. She entered the Chings' house through the backdoor.

"We are looking at her possible involvement in a string of robberies in Bel-Air and one in San Antonio Village because there were consecutive robbery cases reported in these villages. Everybody's a suspect at this time, because how could she have identified which houses were locked up and left with no caretakers, and which ones belonged to wealthy families?," Valerio said.

"She knows where the houses of foreigners are. Though she was alone when she struck, I think there was somebody helping her because she was able to enter exclusive villages through access stickers on her windshield," he added.

Other cases

The police believe that De Guzman was also involved in recent robberies in Bel-Air Village. A house on Aries Street, the residence of Indonesian military attaché Gunadi Budi Prayitno, was robbed over the weekend, while another house on Mercury Street, owned by businessman Bienvenido Banaag was ransacked at dawn yesterday.

When she was presented to Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday afternoon, De Guzman covered her face with a handkerchief and replied only briefly to reporters' questions.

Aliases

She told Binay she was from Marikina, but police traced her last address as Valencia Hills in Quezon City. They also found a driver's license in her wallet bearing her picture but under a different name.

De Guzman was also known by several aliases, including Mary Josephine Roque Garcia, Marilou de Guzman, and Anna Marie Valerio Vejunco Villa.

She was jailed at the Correctional Institute for Women in Mandaluyong City in March 2005 after she was sentenced to six to 20 years imprisonment for theft and several other criminal cases. De Guzman escaped on June 13 while recovering from an operation at the St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City that doctors had certified as necessary, said CIW security official, Assistant Supt. Jose Bayawa of the Bureau of Corrections.

After her escape, De Guzman was linked to in another robbery in Filinvest 2, Bagong Silang, Quezon City, last August.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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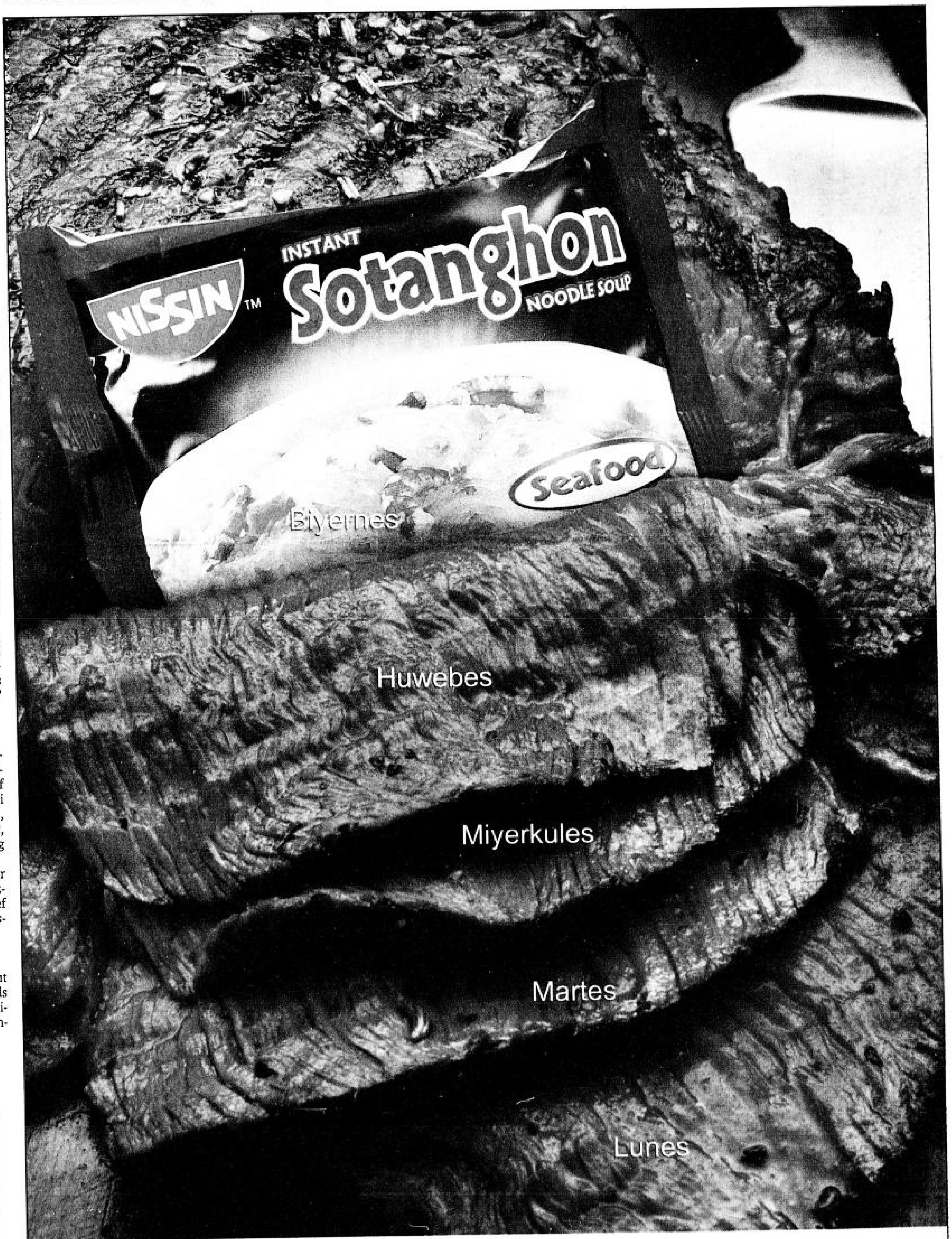

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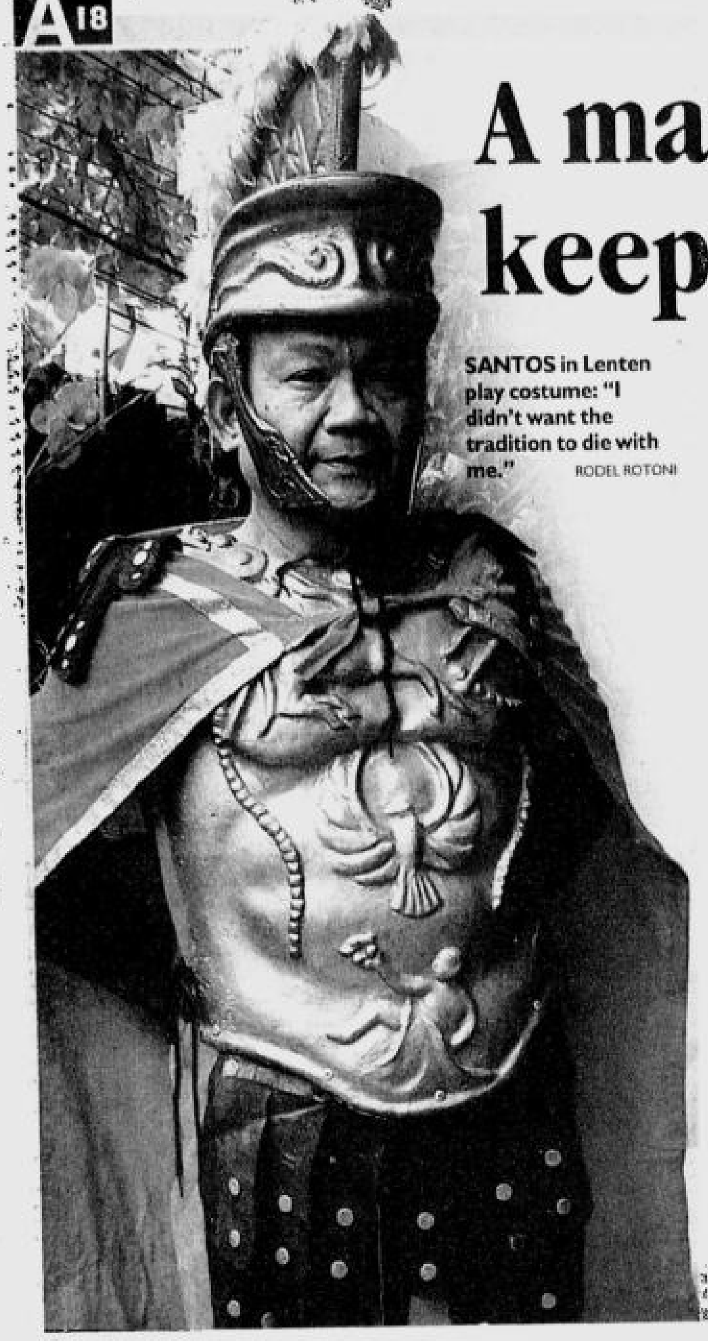
A man's passion for Jesus Christ keeps alive a vanishing tradition



SANTOS in Lenten play costume: "I didn't want the tradition to die with me." RODEL ROTONI

By Jocelyn R. Uy

RUDY SANTOS GREW UP IN SAN Dionisio, an old district in Parañaque City that shakes off the doldrums when huge crowds troop to the small plaza to watch the Senakulo during the Lenten season.

As a child, the 62-year-old barangay leader used to watch the work of his two grandfathers who were among San Dionisio's crop of pre-World War II stage actors and playwrights.

Santos vowed to continue the staging of the Senakulo, the oldest surviving play staged in the city during the Holy Week, in the tradition of his grandfathers. He believed that the only way to continue the tradition was to involve the younger generation in the the production of the Lenten play.

THE LAST Supper as depicted in the Senakulo. RODEL ROTONI

Seasonal actors

In 1984, he established the San Dionisio Cultural and Historical Society, Inc. (SDCHSI), an organization that pooled together the barangay's untapped talents and neophyte thespians.

Today, the SDCHSI has about 50 regular and some 50 "seasonal" actors, with ages between 12 to 50, all residents of the barangay. Santos said the organization is not choosy about picking their actors, but an interesting personality always counted.

"We get anyone who can carry a tune and knows how to dance. We want to give those people, who have no means or strings to pull to get into big-time talent centers. In a way, this would be an opportunity for those who are artistically-inclined to develop their talents," Santos told the INQUIRER.

The San Dionisio native was only 16 when he landed a role in the Senakulo. With his talent for singing, he was asked to join the cast by his grandfathers.

Since then, he played either the roles of Dimas, the thief who died with Christ on Calvary on Good Friday; Matthew, the apostle, a Roman soldier or a pastor, making him one of the youngest member of the Parañaque Senakulista Movement in 1960.

New roles

But he had a change of heart 20 years later when he realized that his role was not on stage, but as director, producer, costume designer and writer of the Senakulo, only after a small chapel in the neighborhood was built in 1980, he recalled.

The cast of his first production was made up of his neighbors, virtually making them the original members of the organization.

The following year and thereafter, his group would annually stage the Senakulo at the San Dionisio Plaza on Holy Wednesday on a shoestring budget.

The group has staged cultural, musical shows and *serenatas* at in places as far as Pangasinan. It has even come up with a plan to hold a San Dionisio Lenten Festival.

With the festival, the SDCHSI hopes that the city will make it to the list of tourist spots for devout Catholics all over the world.

2 men in payroll robbery nabbed

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BRAVING THE HEAVY TRAFFIC and intense noontime heat, two men robbed a company employee of P227,000 in the middle of a busy street in Pasig City yesterday. They opened fire at a responding policeman and threw money in the air in an attempt to escape, but the two were arrested later.

Police identified the suspects as Josie Cafarino, 28, of Barangay Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City; and Ponciano Castor, 38, of Esteban Street, Mandaluyong City.

The daring robbery also wounded a 16-year-old cigarette vendor who was in the area during the shootout as investigators said they were verifying information that two other robbers had managed to escape, SPO2 Roberto Garcia told the INQUIRER.

Garcia said Reliable Work Force and General Services employee Elmer Tejolan, 29, was driving a grey Toyota Revo on the Mandaluyong-bound lane of Shaw Boulevard in Pasig City at about 12:30 p.m. yesterday. A few meters from the corner of One San Miguel Avenue, two men on a blue Kawasaki motorcycle blocked his path.

As the traffic light turned red, the two men got off the motorcycle. Both then fired at the car simultaneously, shattering the windows.

At gunpoint, they forcibly took two brown envelopes from Tejolan: one containing P207,000 and another, P20,000. Garcia said the money was supposed to be given as wages for company workers.

Tejolan was unhurt but the gunshots caught the attention of SPO4 Cecilio Santos, who was driving his motorcycle and escorting Pasig Mayor Eusebio through traffic. They had just come from the Pasig City Hall and Eusebio was on his way to a lunch meeting.

Ruse

Santos, who was in his uniform, identified himself as a policeman but the alleged robbers aimed their guns at him. The 53-year-old policeman sought cover by sliding his motorcycle on the pavement. He pulled out his service firearm and traded shots with the robbers, who were firing their guns as they hopped on their motorcycle to escape.

The suspects even threw money in the air as they fled, driving toward the Mandaluyong side of Shaw Boulevard, as bystanders rushed to get the bills.

But Santos and his fellow security escorts gave chase. The suspects, possibly out of panic, accidentally fell off their motorcycle, and responding policemen from nearby Mandaluyong City were ready to meet them on the other side of the street.

Garcia said they also recovered a 9 mm handgun from the suspects. He said it was possible that two other suspects on another motorcycle managed to escape, possibly with some of the loot. Of the over P200,000 stolen, only P755 was recovered.

METROBRIEFS

Makati lifts number coding

MAKATI City is joining the bandwagon—but only for two days. The city's Department of Public Safety announced yesterday that it will be suspending the number-coding scheme on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Makati is the only city in the metropolis which opted not to lift the Unified Vehicle Volume Reduction Program this summer as proposed by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. Motorists in the financial capital of the country, however, will still be able to use their cars over the weekend as the city government will go back to implementing the UVVRP on Monday, April 17. ***Tarra V. Quismundo***

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Prepaid cards stolen

SOMEONE out there could be sending a whole lot of text messages. Up to P1.3 million worth of prepaid cellular phone cards was stolen by burglars from a retail company in Quezon City on Sunday. Unidentified persons broke into the offices of Monheim Global Inc. at 1152 Seneca Building on E. Rodriguez Ave., Barangay Mariana between 7 a.m. and 1 p.m. on April 9, according to police. Taken were 18 cartons of Globe prepaid cards in P300 denominations, general manager Abel Manliclic told PO2 Joel Gagaza of the Quezon City Police District criminal investigation division. The office had been padlocked, but the suspects were apparently able to gain entry by picking the locks, Gagaza said. A team of scene-of-the-crime operatives led by Chief Insp. Gregorio Villanueva inspected the store. Police are now trying to find witnesses who can identify the burglars. ***DJ Yap***

Mini shabu lab raided

AUTHORITIES yesterday raided a "mini" shabu laboratory inside a subdivision in Muntinupa City. In a bungalow at Mutual Homes Phase 3 in Soldiers Hills, Barangay Putatan, operatives from the National Capital Region Police Office found various chemicals that could produce 10 kilos of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu in just one "cooking," said Senior Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr., chief of the Regional Intelligence Services and Operations Office. Police also seized an undetermined amount of ephedrine, one of the drug's ingredients, along with cooking utensils and burners. The police said they learned about the house after the arrest of four suspects in a drug bust on April 9. The house which was registered in the name of a certain Sally Jahil Edris. However, no one was arrested during the raid. "This is an abandoned house... the neighbors said its occupants only come to the house at night," Rojas added. ***Jocelyn R. Uy***

Museums closed

THE NATIONAL Museum, which includes the Museum of the Filipino People, and the Planetarium on T. Valencia Circle, Manila will be closed to the public from April 12 to 16. The Planetarium will reopen on April 18 while the exhibition gallery at the Museum of the Filipino People will resume operations on April 19. For inquiries, please call the Museum Education Division at 5270278, Museum of the Filipino People 5243005 and the Planetarium 5277889.

MRT, LRT to suspend operations during Holy Week break

By Daxim L. Lucas

OPERATIONS OF METRO MANILA's three main commuter rail lines will be suspended during the Holy Week break due to the expected drop in passenger traffic.

Metro Rail Transit Authority officials said the MRT Line 3 will not operate from Maundy Thursday, April 13, until Black Saturday, April 15.

Operations will resume on Easter Sunday, April 16, with the first train leaving the North Avenue station at 7 a.m. instead of the regular 5 a.m. start of operations.

"We are really expecting low passenger volume during these days so we decided to suspend operations," MRT 3 engineer Mike Narca said in a telephone interview.

He said the company will also use the break to conduct maintenance work on the trains, passenger stations, as well as on the tracks.

"We will take the chance to check all our facilities," Narca said.

So far, ridership on the rail system has been normal since the start of the week, he said.

"We expect the (passenger) volume to stay at these levels until Wednesday night," Narca said.

On the other hand, operations of the two commuter train systems under the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) will cease from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday.

In a phone interview, LRTA administrator Mel Robles said the LRT Line 1 and Line 2 will start running again at 5 a.m. on Monday, April 17.

"This is the only time we can do intensive maintenance work (since) there are few people in Metro Manila," he said. "This is the only time of the year when we have as much time to do this kind of work."

The LRTA will carry out maintenance work on the train bogeys and replace worn out track sections.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Delivery & Supply of Medical/Surgical, Dental, X-ray, Laboratory and Blood Bank Supplies

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC), through the GOP and Hospital Income intends to apply the sum of fifty million (P50,000,000.00) pesos being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Delivery & Supply of Medical/Surgical, Dental, X-ray, Laboratory and Blood Bank Supplies. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Delivery & Supply of Medical/Surgical, Dental, X-ray, Laboratory and Blood Bank Supplies. Delivery of the GOODS is required by the second quarter of 2006. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of two thousand pesos (P2,000.00). The method of payment will be cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **April 17, 2006, 9:00 AM** at the Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) Conference Hall

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on **April 28, 2006, 9:00 AM.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on **April 28, 2006, 9:00 AM** at the CVMC Conference Hall. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below

Issuance of Bid Documents will be from **April 18-21, 2006, 1:00 to 5:00 PM.**

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 7 & 12, 2006)

Ex-solon's family still waiting for justice

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.
and Luige A. del Puerto

NEARLY A YEAR AFTER FORMER Pasig Rep. Henry Lanot was shot dead inside a restaurant, his family is still waiting for justice to be served.

Lanot's son, Henry II, went to Camp Crame yesterday to air his family's disappointment over the slow progress of the case.

"At present, no positive development or progress of the investigation comes up to satisfy our cravings for justice," a letter from the family said.

Disappointing

"It is really disappointing to think that your department has done nothing to solve the case, but we honestly believe that you are not sleeping on it and your men are working hard to bring the criminals behind bars at the earliest possible time," the letter read.

According to Lanot's son, their family has received information from a witness about the identity of the man who shot the former congressman dead on April 13, 2005. Lanot was killed while he was having lunch inside the Jade Palace restaurant on Shaw Boulevard.

The only problem is, there is no one who could point to the suspect as the one who had shot his father dead.

"We are calling on witnesses who could provide information to help us," Henry II told reporters.

According to him, the witness had approached them two months after the murder and said a gunman had tried to recruit him for a "hit" in Pasig City.

"Our witness refused the offer. The hit was to be made on April 13. When it happened, it was only then that he was able to piece together the events," Henry II said.

Chance encounter

Apparently, the witness and the man who had made the offer were both parolees and had met, though Lanot did not say where—when they reported to their parole officer.

The witness said he declined the job, but was shocked when he heard the following day that Lanot had been killed.

"He told us he was bothered, because my father had been good to him," Lanot's son said, quoting their witness.

When a gunman was arrested less than two weeks ago for a different murder case, the witness identified the suspect as the one who had approached him.

Lanot's supporters had claimed that the assassination was politically motivated but Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio, who won over Lanot during the hotly contested mayoral elections two years ago, denied the allegations.

Just like his murder, Lanot still has an unsolved electoral protest against Eusebio. "We also would like to call on the Supreme Court to resolve the protest. We want to know the truth behind what our father fought for," Henry II said.

The Philippine National Police, meanwhile, assured Lanot's son that investigators were working on the case. PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao also instructed Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino to "immediately (make) this a priority," Pagdilao said.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Prodi claims victory in Italy poll

ROME—CENTER-LEFT LEADER Romano Prodi claimed a knife-edge victory in Italy's general election on Tuesday, but Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's allies disputed the result and demanded a review of the count.

"We have won ... from today we turn a page," Prodi told a rally in a Rome square about 12 hours after the polls closed.

"The country is divided ... it was a very difficult battle, until the last minute we were on the edge of the razor but in the end victory arrived," said Prodi, the former European Commission president.

Official data showed that in the lower house Chamber of Deputies Prodi's center-left had taken about 49.80 percent of the vote compared with 49.73 percent for Berlusconi. Prodi's winning margin was around 25,000 votes, a tiny fraction of Italy's 47 million eligible electors.

"Divided country," "Neck-and-Neck" and "Split down the Middle" were the headlines used in most mainstream newspapers to describe the vote, the closest election in modern history.

The close result revealed deep splits at the heart of Italian society and raised doubts over whether the country could be governed effectively.

Under Italy's new electoral system, the ballot winners are automatically granted 340 of the lower house's 630 seats no matter how small their margin of victory in the popular vote, with the runners up getting some 277 seats.

Center-right politicians said the vote was too close, with up to a half a million spoilt and annulled ballots. Counting for the upper house Senate was also not yet complete, they said.

"Neither side reached 50 percent (in the lower house) and the margin is under 25,000 votes. Such a tiny difference necessitates a scrupulous checking of the counting and tally sheets ..." Paolo Bonauiti, Berlusconi's right-hand man, told reporters in the early morning hours.

A reevaluation of the spoilt ballots could unleash political chaos in Italy, evoking the 2000 US presidential election, which ended in a bitter recount battle in Florida.

Berlusconi himself has not yet commented on the results. *Reuters*

REUTERS

PRODI with grandchild at a Rome rally April 11.

Hamas: Israeli moves a declaration of war

WOUNDED child is rushed to hospital after a house was hit by Israeli shelling in Gaza April 10.

GAZA—ISRAEL SUSPENDED formal security ties to the Palestinian government on Monday in what Hamas said amounted to "a declaration of war."

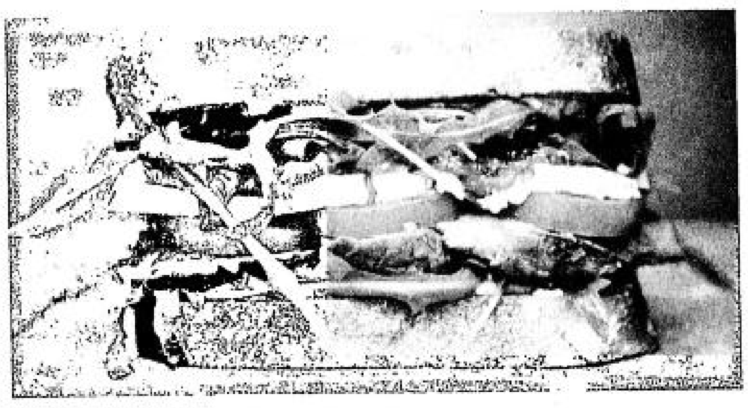
European Union foreign ministers added to US and Israeli pressure on the Islamic militant group by approving a temporary halt in direct EU aid to the new government.

Thousands of Palestinians poured onto the streets of Gaza, protesting Western aid cuts and a spike in Israeli military strikes since election victor Hamas took control of the Palestinian Authority in late March.

An Israeli shell killed a young Palestinian girl and injured 12 others, including five children, when it hit a house in the northern Gaza Strip, Palestinian officials said.

Israel says the shelling in Gaza is meant to combat rocket attacks by militants.

Avi Dichter, a top adviser to interim Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, told Israel Radio that a ground assault of Gaza could not be ruled out. *Reuters*


YUMMY BUT PRICEY

London's most expensive sandwich sold at Selfridges in London April 10. The sandwich, on sale for 85 pounds ($148), contains Wagyu beef, fresh lobe foie gras, black truffle mayonnaise, brie de meaux, rocket, red pepper and mustard confit and English plum tomatoes. REUTERS

French students to press on despite gov't cave-in

PARIS—FRENCH STUDENTS, BUOYED by President Jacques Chirac's sudden cave-in on a youth employment measure, vowed to hold protests Tuesday to try to get rid of other government measures.

Unions declared victory on Monday after Chirac dumped the measure that had spurred nationwide unrest, paralyzed high schools and universities and discredited the government.

Energized students decided to go ahead with the day of action to consign other measures to the garbage heap.

In an announcement that amounted to a humiliating admission of defeat, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin said on nationwide TV that the contested measure would be replaced. *AP*

Rainiest March threatens floods in California

SAN FRANCISCO—GOV. ARNOLD Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in seven northern and central California counties, saying the region's rainiest March on record and more rain on the horizon put people and property in "extreme peril."

Many reservoirs in California's Central Valley are groaning at full capacity, and at least 10 more days of rain are forecast for the region.

Levee repairs are typically done in the summer, when water behind them is at its low point, but state water officials fear the heavy rain could weaken some levees to the point of failure. They took advantage of a weekend lull in the storms to patch some weak spots in the system but were still concerned.

"We saw in New Orleans the storm was coming in, it was known days ahead, and we're not sure they took all the steps that they could have," said Rodney Mayer, acting chief of the California division of flood management.

Schwarzenegger had already declared a state of emergency for California's levee system in February, a step that freed up about $103 million for repairs to 24 flood-prone sites.

His new declaration Monday did not specify an amount of aid but directed "all agencies of the state" to dispatch staff, equipment and facilities. *AP*

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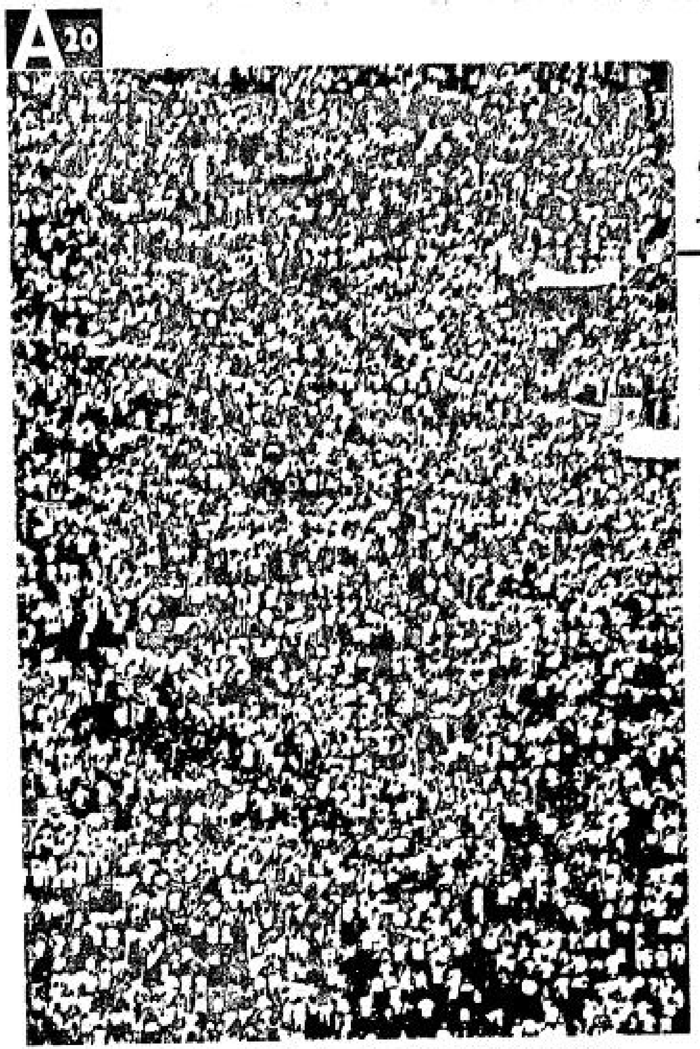


PROTESTERS rally in Washington along the National Mall for immigrant rights April 10. REUTERS

Proimmigration rallies continue to sweep US

NEW YORK—HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF people demanding US citizenship for illegal immigrants took to the streets in dozens of cities from New York to San Diego in some of the most widespread demonstrations since the mass protests began around the country last month.

Rallies took place Monday in communities of all sizes, from a gathering of at least 50,000 people in Atlanta to one involving 3,000 people in the farming town of Garden City, Kansas, which has fewer than 30,000 residents.

Demonstrators in New York City held signs with slogans such as "We Are America," "Immigrant Values are Family Values," and "Legalize Don't Criminalize." One sign said: "Bush Step Down."

"We love this country. This country gives to us everything," said Florentino Cruz, 32, an illegal worker from Mexico who has been in the United States since 1992. "This country was made by immigrants."

The protesters have been urging lawmakers to help an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants settle legally in the United States. A bill passed by the House would crack down on illegal immigrants and strengthen the nation's border with Mexico. A broader overhaul of immigration law stalled in the Senate last week.

Monday's demonstrations followed a weekend of rallies in 10 states that drew up to 500,000 people in Dallas and tens of thousands elsewhere. Dozens of other rallies, many organized by Spanish-language radio disc jockeys, have been held nationwide over the past two weeks, including one with more than 500,000 people in Los Angeles. *AP*

A DEMONSTRATOR outside City Hall in Wichita, Kan. AP

SEPT. 11 TRIAL

Terror on 99th floor

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA—THE dying shriek of a man caught on a cellphone as he was swallowed by the collapsing World Trade Center capped a day of horror at the Sept. 11 death penalty trial.

In a moment of terror, frozen in time, jurors who must decide whether al-Qaida conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui will be put to death, heard the chilling final moments of the life of Kevin Cosgrove, trapped in his 99th floor office.

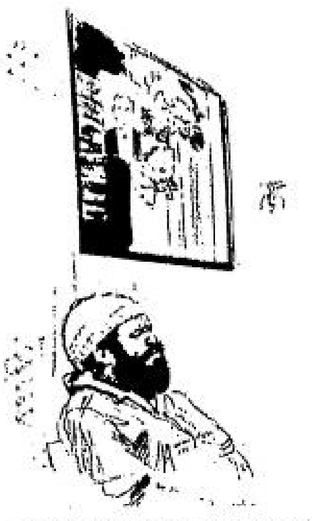
The final snippet of conversation coincided with the moment at 9:58 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2001, when the 110-storey south tower, turned into a fireball by a hijacked airliner, collapsed in a cloud of smoke, flame and debris.

"Oh my God ... Aaaaarrgggghhhh ..." Cosgrove, vice president of insurance broker Aon Corp., was heard shouting to an emergency dispatcher, his voice fading, amid crashing sounds, before the line went dead.

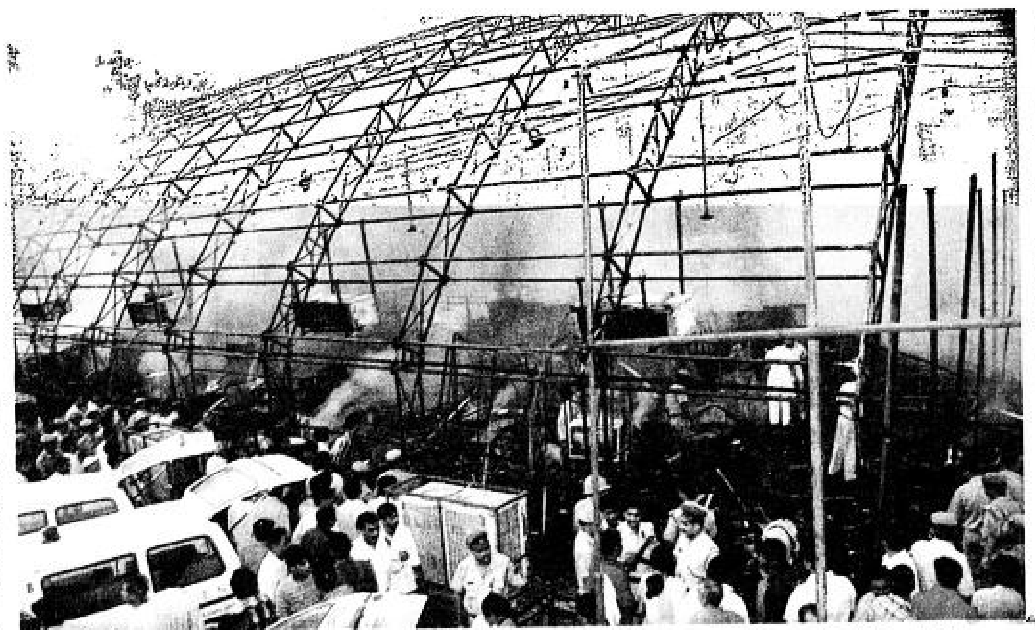
Observers in the courtroom Monday wiped away tears, many disturbed by the call, played with a synchronized video tape, showing the moment when the tower fell in a nuclear-like cloud of debris.

Jurors will reassemble later Tuesday for another day of grief and sorrow sown on the 2001 day when suicide hijackers pulled off the deadliest attack-ever on US soil.

The nine men and three women of the jury, plus five alternates have now sat through two harrowing days of witness testimony called by prosecution lawyers. *AFP*



ARTIST'S sketch of Moussaoui listening to a 9/11 tape. AP



RESCUE workers and police at the site of a fire which engulfed a trade fair in Meerut, India April 10. AFP

Blaze at Indian fair kills 51

MEERUT, INDIA—ANGRY RESIDENTS of a city in north India demanded action against local officials on Tuesday after a fire at a crowded consumer fair killed at least 51 people.

People in Meerut blamed the administration for a lack of safety measures at the electronics goods fair, where some 2,000 people were gathered when the fire broke out on Monday.

Witnesses and officials said a short-circuit caused the fire, which spread rapidly to polythene sheets covering a temporary enclosure where air conditioners, television sets and other home appliances were on display.

Hundreds of people rushed along a corridor towards a single exit in the long, tented structure. The blaze soon engulfed two neighboring tents.

"There was nobody to help us when we were ferrying victims.

"People did everything on their own. And how could they hold such a big event without a fire brigade stationed there?" said resident Puneet Agarwal. *Reuters*

Possible US strike on Iran seen fraught with risks

WASHINGTON—THE ADMINISTRATION of US President George W. Bush would likely spark a costly and unpredictable conflict should it strike Iran's suspected nuclear sites, analysts said after reports that such strikes were under review.

According to Richard Haas, an expert at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), such strikes would be unlikely to remain "limited," as Tehran would also certainly retaliate.

"You cannot go into it assuming it will stay limited," Hass said at a CFR debate last week, adding "so very quickly, a limited military operation becomes a relatively unlimited military operation."

Separate articles in the New Yorker magazine and the Washington Post newspaper over the weekend resparked a controversial debate here over a potential US military strike against Iran, with the media reports talking of possible air strikes against Iran's nuclear sites.

President Bush sought to downplay the articles, telling an audience Monday that Washington wants to settle the Iran nuclear crisis through diplomacy and calling the reports "wild speculation."

Kenneth Pollack, an expert at the Washington-based Brookings Institution think tank, said it's "highly likely" there would be a "furious" Iranian response to such assaults.

"You can't assume that if you take out their nuclear facilities that they are going to take it lying down and quiver and shake. You have to assume that they will come back and try to hurt you," Pollack said, addressing the same CFR debate. *AFP*

Oil prices inch closer to $70

SINGAPORE—OIL PRICES INCHED closer to $70 a barrel in Asian trading Tuesday as reports of a possible US military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities rattled the market, dealers said.

At 2:25 p.m., New York's main contract, light sweet crude for May delivery was at $69.17 a barrel, up 43 cents from its close of $68.74 in the United States Monday.

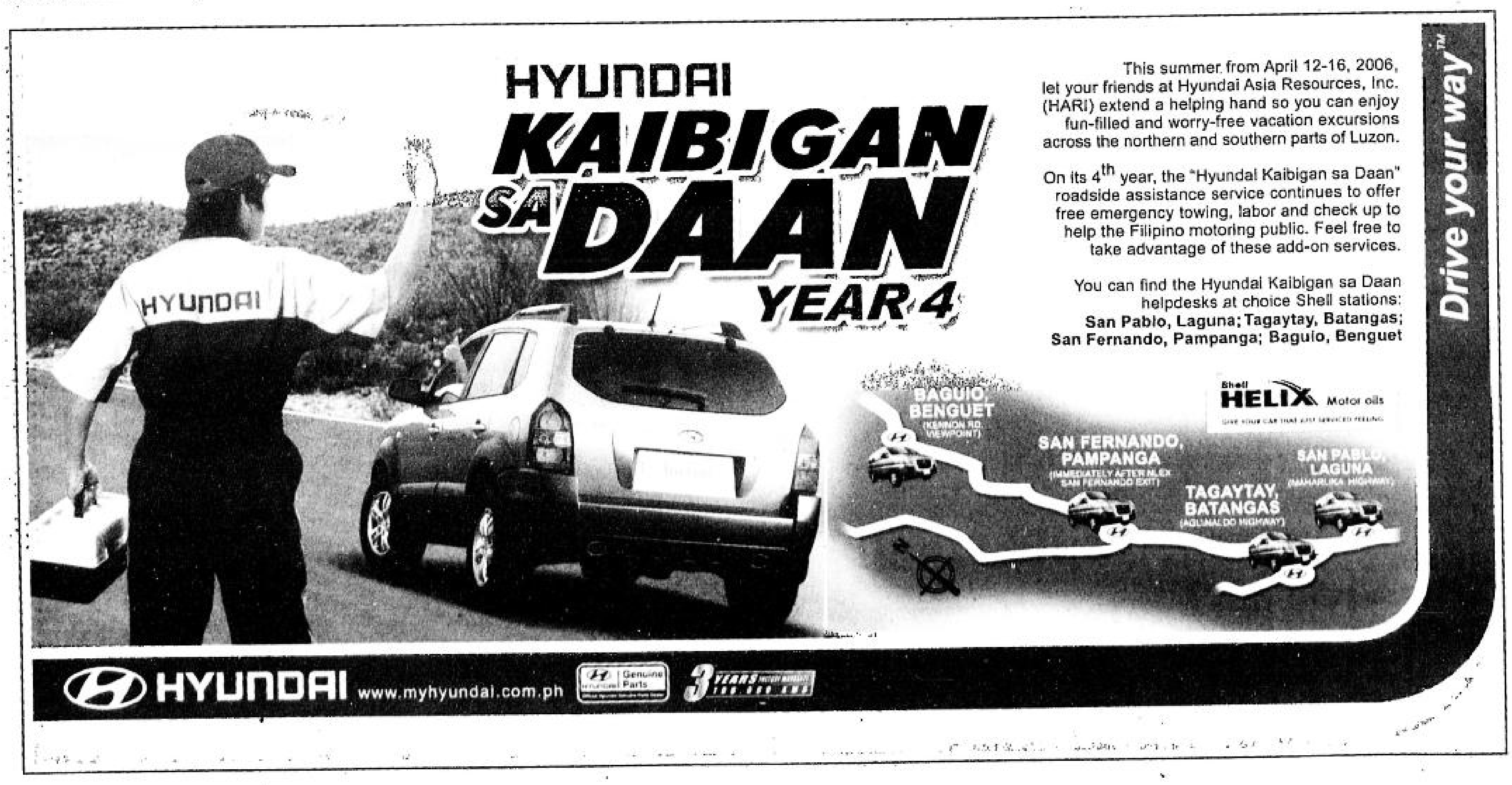
The all-time high for the benchmark futures contract was $70.85 a barrel reached on Aug. 30, 2005 after Hurricane Katrina hammered oil production facilities in the US Gulf of Mexico region.

Dealers said the market ignored efforts by President George W. Bush to dismiss as "wild speculation" weekend reports that Washington was studying options for military strikes against Iran's uranium facilities.

"Obviously some market participants are reacting to it and so this morning the market continues to be bullish about it," said Victor Shum, an analyst in Singapore with global energy consultancy Purvin and Gertz.

The Washington Post and the New Yorker magazine reported over the weekend that the White House was exploring military options against Tehran which had vowed not to back down over its controversial nuclear program.

Washington and its allies believe Iran is secretly trying to build a nuclear bomb, but the US administration went out of its way Monday to play down the reports. *AFP*



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BI holds Lim despite release order

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE BELEAGUERED SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines seemed doomed to spending the rest of the Holy Week still in detention.

Despite a release order issued by the Court of Appeals last April 7, Graham Lim remains in the custody of the Bureau of Immigration.

Faizal Hussin, BI Intelligence chief, yesterday said he has yet to receive the CA order granting Lim's petition for "immediate release" based on a recently issued temporary restraining order on the BAP official's deportation.

The CA decision stressed that, with the TRO, the BI "has no more basis and authority to further detain" the beleaguered official.

The order was penned by associate justice and chair Rodrigo V. Cosico and concurred with by associate justices Rosalinda Asuncion-Vicente and Sesinado E. Villon.

Immigration chair Alipio Fernandez, however, is reportedly on leave. Arthel Carunungan is serving as acting BI head.

Lim, who is still confined at the Metropolitan Hospital in Tondo, blasted the BI for defying the BI ruling. "I'm appealing to BI officials that they follow the court order," he said.

The BI arrested Lim last March 24 following an earlier ruling that he should be deported as a citizen of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

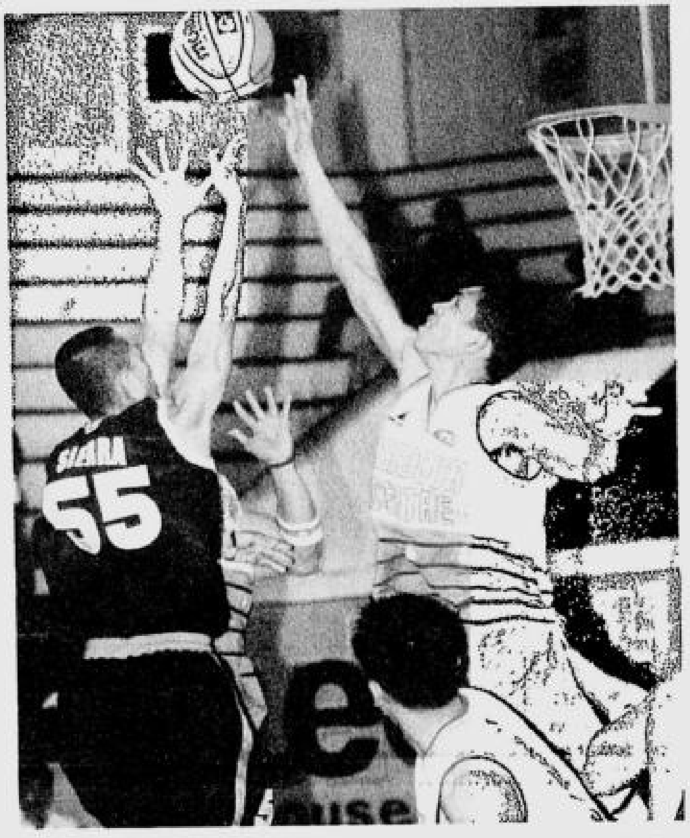
The 49-year-old official was detained at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig, despite his claims that he has a pending case at the CA since December.

A week later, Lim was rushed to the hospital due to high blood pressure and chest pains. He remains under observation.

The BAP is in the midst of a desperate campaign to gain reinstatement from the Philippine Olympic Committee, which expelled the association last year.

The expulsion led to the country's suspension from the world basketball federation.

VISITORS lighten up the day of Graham Lim (fourth from left). Shown are coach Boy Cahanding, FESSAP sec-gen Rolly Tumapat, BAP treasurer Tony Fabico and the RP women's team.



HARBOUR Centre's Jerome Paterno tries to block the shot of TeleTech's Jay Sierra yesterday. ERIK ARAZAS

Tortillos nip Elasto Painters

GAMES TUESDAY *(San Andres Gym)*
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Magnolia
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Montana

By Jasmine W. Payo

TWO MAGNIFICENT SHOTS capped the game with Kelvin dela Peña making the one that truly mattered.

Dela Peña buried a running jumper with time about to expire, lifting Granny Goose to a 62-61 victory over defending champion Rain or Shine in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the San Andres Gym.

The Elasto Painters seemed headed for the win after Jojo Tangkay, last conference's Most Valuable Player, fired a fallaway jumper with 3.9 seconds remaining.

But Dela Peña, the top rookie in the NCAA last season, broke through the Painters' defense to nail the winning shot with just six-tenths of a second left on the clock.

"That was the play, it was a well-executed play," said coach Robert Sison after the Tortillos foiled the Painters' bid for the solo lead. "It was a big win since we were coming off a heartbreaking loss from Harbour Centre."

Dela Peña finished with a game-high 15 points for the Tortillos, who improved to fourth place at 3-3. Alfie Grijaldo contributed 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Rain or Shine slipped to second place at 4-2, half-a-game behind the 4-1 cards of early leaders Montaña and Toyota Otis.

Earlier, Harbour Centre came out firing in the second half for a 77-63 victory over league rookie TeleTech.

Joseph Yeo, who set a conference-high of 27 points last time out, shot a team-best 17 markers this time to lead the Portmasters to their second straight victory after an alarming 0-4 start.

Jerome Paterno stepped up off the bench with 16 points, nine rebounds and two blocks to back up Yeo with point guard LA Tenorio, scoreless the last time up, finishing with a brilliant all-around effort of 12 points, 10 boards, eight rebounds and three steals.

The Portmasters dealt the Titans their fifth defeat against a lone victory.

The scores:

First Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 77—Yeo 17, Paterno 16, Arana 13, Tenorio 12, Gaco 7, Lanete 5, Reyes 4, Chia 3, Maierhofer 0, Gamboa 0, Luanzon 0, Coching 0.

TELETECH 63—Latoreno 13, Gelig 9, Capus 7, Doruelo 6, Mercado 6, Mendoza 5, Sierra 5, Estrada 4, Tolentino 3, Delgado 3, Bughao 2, Villamin 0, Duncil 0.

Quarters: 16-12, 32-35, 55-50, 77-63

Second Game

GRANNY GOOSE 62—Dela Peña 15, Grijaldo 14, Quinahan 11, Ibanes 7, Cruz 7, Latonio 4, Saldua 2, Santos 2, Alfad 0, Concha 0, David 0, Gavino 0.

RAIN OR SHINE 61—Tangkay 15, Reyes 14, Malabanan 7, Eman 6, Ortiguerra 6, Cabatu 4, Orbeta 4, Sagad 2, Enrilé 2, Tan 1, Sta. Maria 0.

Quarters: 14-8, 22-27, 43-51, 62-61

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Laylo keeps men's top spot; Lomibao, Cua lead women's

FORMER PHILIPPINE OPEN CHAMpion NM Darwin Laylo drew with International Master Jayson Gonzales after 79 moves of a Slav Defense Tuesday to keep top spot in the 2006 National Chess Championship (finals) for men and women at the Market Shopping Mall in Gen. Kalentong St., Mandaluyong City.

"*Mahirap pilitin baka masilat pa*," said Laylo, who raised his total to 8.5 points after 10 rounds. "Ok *naman ang* draw at least *lider pa din tayo. Pero ibubuhos ko na ang lahat sa* last three rounds."

The native of San Roque, Marikina City, also beat fellow NM Mirabeau Maga last Monday.

Two-time RP junior champion NM John Paul Gomez agreed to a 15-move draw against Fide Master Oliver Dimakiling of Davao City in their Spanish Game encounter to share 2nd to 3rd places with 8.0 points apiece.

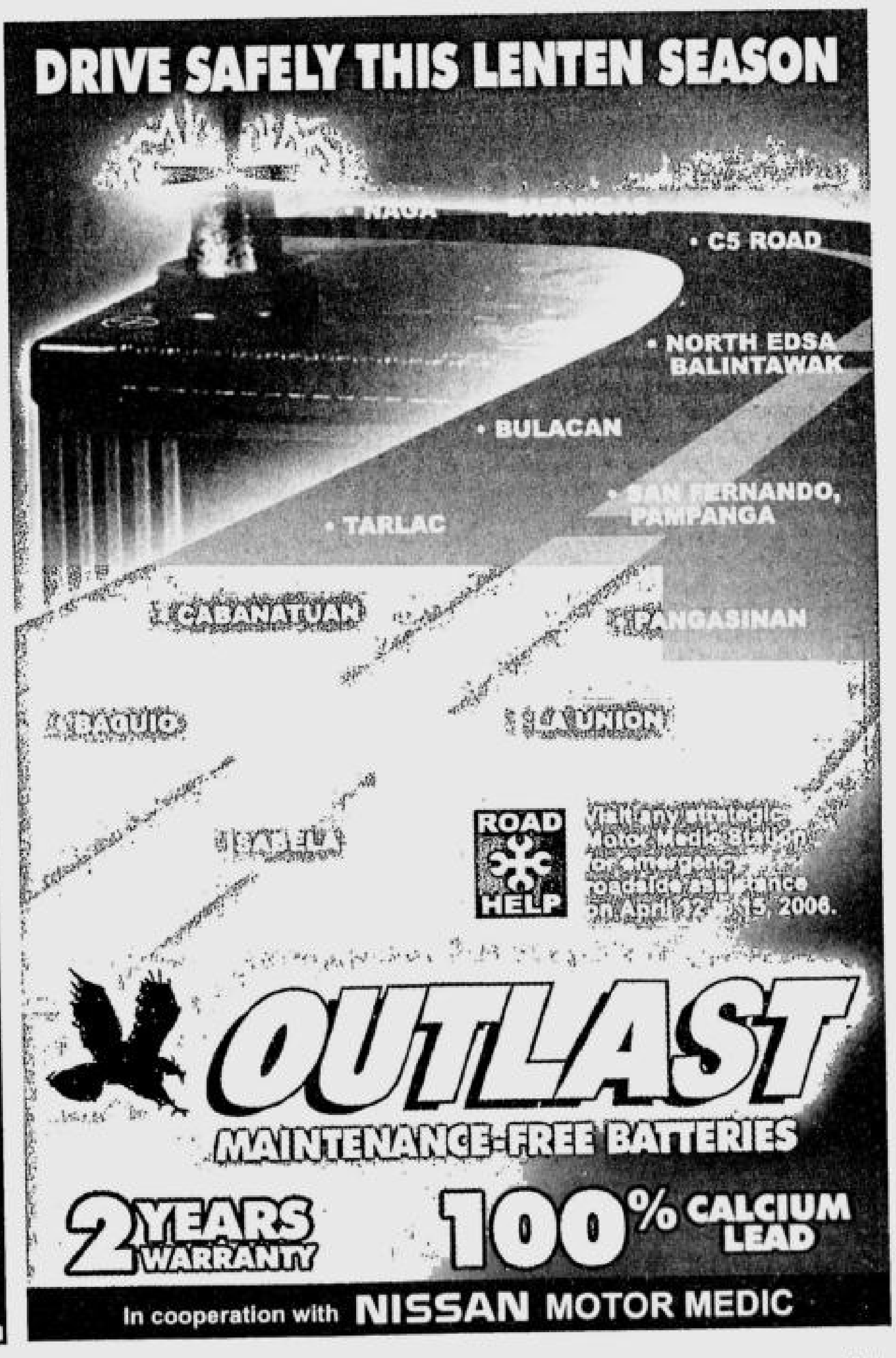
IM Ronald Dableo, 12-year-old FM Wesley So, NMs Roderick Nava, Julius Joseph de Ramos and Rustom Tolentino also made their move to stay in the hunt for the three Chess Olympiad berths up for grabs in the men's division.

Dableo smashed FM Jesse Noel Sales after 38 moves of a Reti Opening while So took the scalp of NM Emmanuel Senador after 33 moves of Bishop Opening to be at 7.5 points. Also with the same total were Nava, who outplayed IM Petronio Roca; De Ramos, who shocked FM Fernie Donguinez; and Tolentino, who upset GM Nelson Mariano II.

NMs Rolando Nolte and Maga nipped NMs Ronald Llavanes and Nouri Hamed, respectively, to remain in the title hunt.

Woman International Master Sheerie Joy Lomibao and WNM Sherily Cua drew after 44 moves of a Queens Pawn Opening to keep their share of the lead in the distaff side. They have 7.0 points each. Kimbely Jane Cunanan upset WNM Shercila Cua to score 6.5 points. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

76ers stay on hunt as Iverson delivers A23



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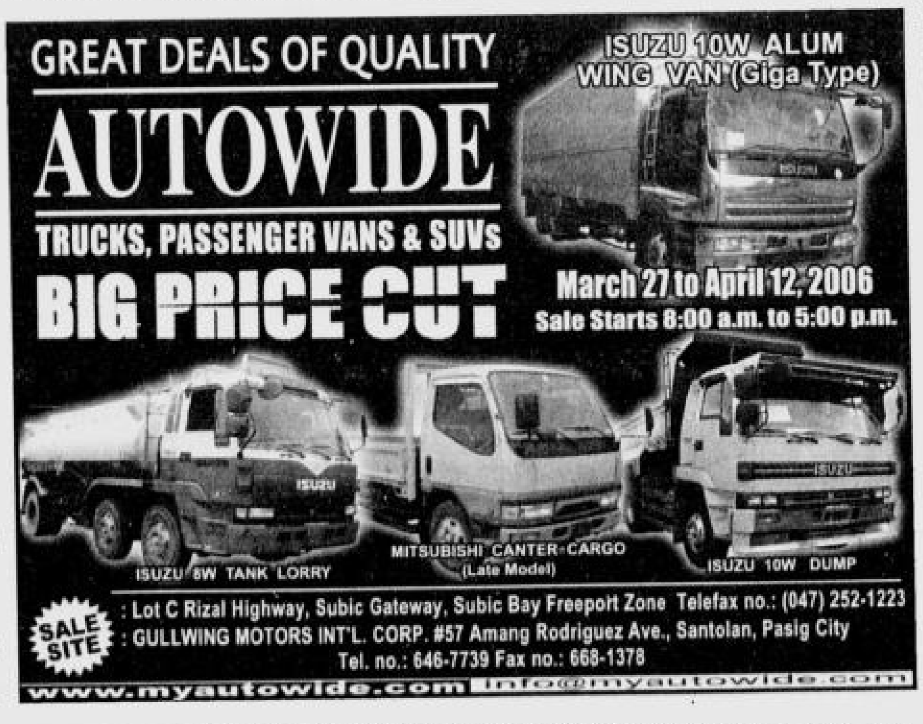

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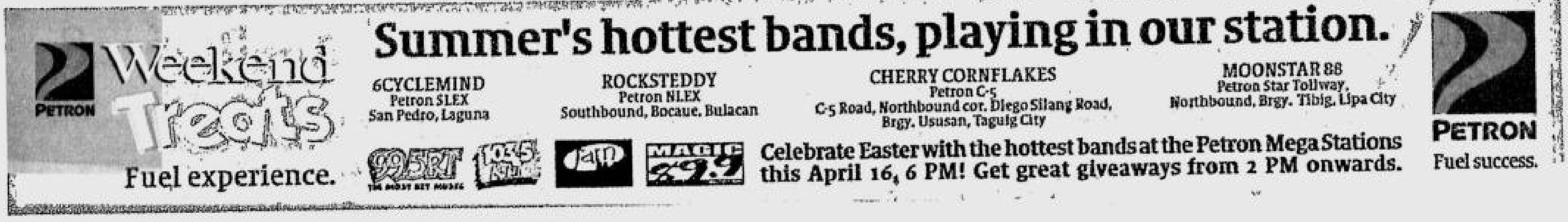

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'New' Realtors excite fans

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

GETTING NO UPDATE ON MOUNTAINEER Romi Garduce (who will attempt to scale the peak of Mt. Everest) despite repeated inquiries from a friend who works at GMA-7, I decided to get in touch with Sta. Lucia team manager and PBA governor Buddy Encarnado, who is a mountaineer himself.

From Buddy I expected to get an accurate evaluation of a Filipino's chance to reach the top of the world's highest mountain where the freezing climate is wholly unfamiliar.

"What are our chances, really and truly?" I asked Buddy in a text message yesterday morning.

***

When Buddy called, the query had to be temporarily set aside, after I made a comment on the 'new' and exciting Sta. Lucia Realtors.

I told Buddy that it was only last Saturday that I realized Sta. Lucia had many fans, based on the numerous calls I got while onboard Radio DZME.

The fans, all the while quiet before, had expressed how thrilled they were with the newly acquired animo, zest and speed of the Realtors.

Jimwell Torion is definitely a great addition to the lineup, the fans pointed out.

Aware that he had a close affinity to Sta. Lucia's three veterans who were sidelined because of injuries, I did not tell Buddy that the fans blamed them for slowing down the team.

***

Not only the fans but even Buddy and team owner Excie Robles are ecstatic over the transformation.

During the luncheon to celebrate his birthday last April 10, Excie gave everyone a pat on the back. Even if the Realtors are still the current cellar dwellers. Even if they lost to the Coke Tigers in overtime last Sunday.

To Excie, it's not a matter of winning or losing. What is important is how the game is played.

"Now they realize what we have been saying all along. The players will never know what they can do until they push themselves to the limit," said Buddy who marveled at how the shorter, undermanned Realtors had capably held the fort against the much taller, bigger Tigers last Sunday.

"Imagine, Norman Gonzales played the starting role as power forward while Ricky Calimag took over the slotman's chores, holding their own against Fil-Ams like Rafi Reavis and Ali Peek."

Torion, of course, provided the impetus and boundless energy which rubbed off on his teammates.

"We have rediscovered ourselves. *Ang taas ng* energy level *ng* team. *Parang walang kapaguran.* Even Paolo Mendoza unraveled a new facet of himself as a leader."

Touching on the sensitive topic of the three vets, Buddy admitted their absence was an eye-opener, "although we did not ask for it (their absence)."

"But you should have seen the way they were cheering for the team from the sidelines last Sunday," Buddy said.

***

Buddy cited several factors that will affect the Filipinos' chances of successfully scaling Mount Everest, but the most important, according to him, are preparation and the weather which could be very unpredictable in the mountain.

"The weather can change at any given time from good to bad or vice versa, so the mountaineer has to be prepared for this. He has to be not only physically tough, but mentally and psychologically prepared as well. *Iba ang* mountain climbing *sa* tropics compared to the frigid zone. *Sa atin, hindi nagbabago ang* face *ng bundok,* while *sa kanila, pwedeng matakpan ng* snow *ang mga* crevices, that's why the *Pinoys* will need to have very good guides *na kabisado ang* mountain."

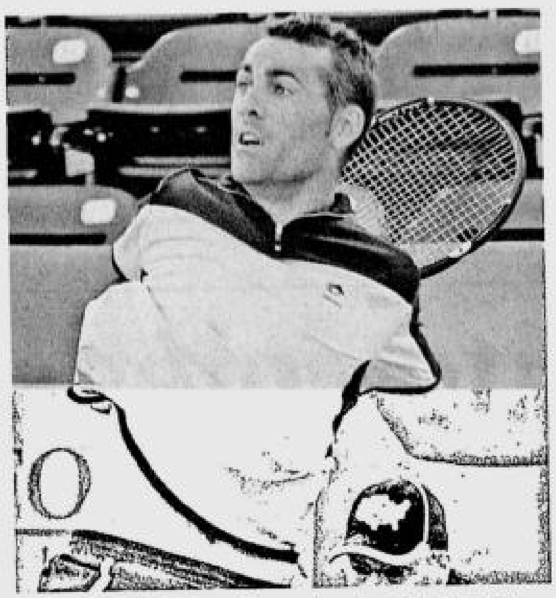
"Extreme" was how Buddy described the conditions at Everest, where the air gets thinner and thinner as the climber goes higher and higher.

I shuddered at the prospects of brain and pulmonary edema and frostbite which will require amputation of the affected part.

As of presstime, there's still no word from my friend from GMA, which is making me wonder.

Meanwhile, Jake Aspiras of ABS-CBN said Dale Abenojar is now acclimatizing at the first Chinese base camp which is 5,000 feet plus above sea level.

Jake said Dale misses his wife Liza and four kids, and he tries to be near them through text messages which he sends regualry.



TWISTED: Spain's Oscar Hernandez gets twisted around after hitting a return against Germany's Tommy Haas in the US Men's Clay Court Championship in Houston, Monday. AP

San Beda thwarts Letran five in Homegrown Cup

SONNY MANUCAT HAD 23 POINTS and Brit Reroma added 22 to power the unbeaten San Beda All-Stars to a 78-76 thriller over Letran in the Total-Filoil-Flying V Homegrown Cup at the San Juan gym, a day before the tourney takes a Lenten break.

The Red Lions alumni picked up their third straight win, keeping pace with idle De La Salle. The Knights fell to 2-2, putting in peril their title aspiration in this maiden tournament sponsored by Shell and Globe and backed up by Sunbolt, Immuvit, Accel, Inihaw Circle, Bank of Commerce, Banco de Oro, PBCom, Gerry's Grill, X-24, Security Bank and Millennium Plans.

The Far Eastern Tamaraws All-Stars, meanwhile, notched their first win in three starts, downing University of the Philippines, 75-69, behind Glenn Capacio's 18 points.

In high school action, the Red Cubs matched their seniors' effort, streaking to their third consecutive win by beating the Squires, 66-60, while the Baby Tamaraws made it a double for FEU, turning back UPIS, 62-56.

First Game (AS)

SAN BEDA 78—Manucat 23, Reroma 22, Reyes 13, Guzman 8, J. Rivera 7, Lucas 4, Oliveros 2, Recid 2, Cristobal 0, Magalong 0, Nabung 0.

LETRAN 76—Moody 13, Garcia 12, Velez 12, Prior 11, Garcia 10, Ramos 8, Aquino 4, Gonzales 4, Sillona 2, Carbonilla 1, Latonio 0, Chua 0.

Quarters: 15-18, 34-28, 51-46, 78-76.

Second Game (AS)

FEU 75—Capacio 18, De Guzman 15, Gascon 15, Valenzona 7, Padaong 7, Gaspar 7, Valle 3, Dela Rosa 2, Castelo 1, Ang 0, Pasco D. 0, Pasco R. 0, Amador 0.

UP 69—Ferrer 22, Arandia 19, Marata 7, Yu 6, Rios 6, Javier 4, Madrid 2, Salva 2, Cruz 1, Dandan 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 22-16, 44-34, 58-52, 75-69.

JAKARTA SWIMFEST

Fresh talents boost RP team

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A NEW GROUP OF YOUNG SWIMMERS EXPECTED TO FORM THE NEXT BATCH OF national tankers hurdled qualifying recently and earned the right to represent the Philippines in the 30th Southeast Asian age-group championships in Jakarta on June 1-3.

A total of 18 new faces in the boys division and 13 girls coming from the 11-17 age bracket will join a mix of Southeast Asian Games veterans in the prestigious Indonesia joust, considered as the breeding ground of SEAG swim champs.

Wilfred Laysico, Maxim Quilala, Matthew Tano in the 15-17 years old; Nikita Dacera, Kevin Mercado, Emmanuel Plasabas, Emil Jake Quijano, Narciso Sandico, Sean Tan, Joshua Acain, Rey Carandang, Ivan Mercado, Domenico Venuti, Timothy Yap in the 13-14; and Joshua Desamero, Jose Joaquin Gonzalez, Gian Berino and Joselito Vinluan in the 11-12 were the boys who made the national lineup.

The group joins SEAG veterans Mark Tano, Ryan Arabejo, Jan Michael Chiu, Kendrick Uy, Ernest Dee and age-groupers Michael Mars Danila, Banjo Borja, Carlos Fernandez, Phil Anderson Lee and John Bryle Zapanta in the boys team.

Ingrid Ilustra, a bright performer for Dapitan in the recent Manila Youth Games, won a slot and will be joined by fellow newcomers Tessa Alcantara, Monique Bacolod, Marvie Borja, Bianca Uy, Edzen Dinglasan and Liane Marquez in the 15-17 category.

Erica Visitacion will be the 13-14 top bet with Jasmine Al-Khaldi, Christine Grace Tan, Whitney Dy, Loren Dale Echavez, Kimberly Go, Celina Gonzalez and Ilustre to campaign in the 11-12 bracket.

Marichi Gandionco, Chrizel Lagunday and Denjylie Cordero, SEAG veterans all, complete the girls squad.

Philippine Amateur Swimming Association president Mark Joseph expressed confidence of being able to find talents from the pool good enough to swim for the Philippines in the Final world junior championships in Brazil in August.

The country won three gold medals in swimming during last year's SEA Games through United States-based tanker Miguel Molina and Miguel Mendoza.

BAGUIO and Mama Sita split honors in the recent Legenda-Summer Beach Football Championship held inside the Subic Freeport, winning the women's and men's division titles, respectively. Defending women's champion Baguio beat Viva Greens, 3-0, while Mama Sita bested Makiling United, 2-0, in the finals. Women's MVP Fiona Mackenzie of Viva Greens in action.

Call him Rev. Padim Israel

From swatting balls to saving souls

By Lito Cinco

"YOU MAY ALSO CALL ME PASTOR OR Reverend," offered the lanky, good-looking fellow.

Remember Federico (Padim) Israel, who once shone, albeit quietly, as a star in the PBA?

From swatting balls on the hardcourt, he has turned into a fulltime soldier of the Lord.

Listen to the story of his happy conversion from a firm, no-nonsense defender on the hardcourt to a saviour of lost souls: "When I retired in 1992, I did not have anything to do. I just wanted to rest from basketball that I even turned down some offers for coaching jobs. What I did not know was that our Church leaders were seeing something in me. Before I knew it, they offered me to become a student-pastor, which is practically a full-time church ministry work though it was in 1994 when I really got involved with ministry work."

A long-time member of the Bread from Heaven Christian Fellowship in BF Homes in Parañaque, which is under the Christian Reform Church in the Philippines, Padim said basketball is definitely a thing of the past.

"I look at my responsibilities now as teaching and preaching the word of God and to pray for the people," he explained.

Born again

Actually it was in 1987, in the house of another Born Again cager and former Crispa teammate Freddie Hubalde, when he said he "received Jesus in my heart as my Lord and Saviour."

He said he received the Lord together with his wife, Ogie, more popularly known as Rio Locsin of the movie world.

Padim has a 16-year-old daughter and two stepdaughters with the actress.

Anyway, he was candid enough to admit that "ever since, I believe I really did not possess the necessary basketball talents and skills like other players. It was just that I found my niche in playing defense and that is where I focused and made my mark."

PADIM with his all-female family (from left): Paula, Ogie, Padim, Costa Palma and Joses Charisse.

After his conversion in 1987, Padim became more interested in Bible studies and was hungry for more religious training, slowly turning away from his very temporal and material world in the PBA to a deeper and more spiritual life.

To refresh memories of basketball fans who may not be familiar with this good-looking cager, who will turn 50 in September, he was with the back-to-back NCAA varsity champion team of Ateneo in 1975 and 1976, together with glamour boys Steve Watson, Fritz Gaston, Joy Carpio, Eu Puyat, Bambi Kabigting, and Ogie Narvasa among others.

From the collegiate ranks, Padim played with the national team and the amateur teams of Crispa and powerhouse APCOR from 1978 to 1980 before turning professional with powerhouse Crispa in 1981 and staying with the Redmanizers until their disbandment in 1984.

He played for three more PBA teams, Tanduay, Purefoods, and Presto until 1992. Collectively, he was part of nine PBA championship teams.

At first, Padim said he used his being an ex-basketball player to spread the word of God by playing with fellow cagers who have likewise turned to religion like Jojo Lastimosa, Eddie Boy Mendoza, Alex Tan, Freddie Hubalde, Abet Guidaben, and American preacher-player Tom Randall. They played local teams and, in between halves, they would preach the word of the Lord. Nowadays though, Padim rarely sees former basketball buddies.

Assistant pastor

As an assistant pastor, Padim is on call 24 hours a day.

"I preach every Sunday in one of four services, I also do training programs, visitations and consoling in our ministry," he said with a smile of fulfillment.

Padim could not believe it, but he's now called and recognized as "Reverend."

This means he can solemnize weddings, he has actually done around ten, and can baptize, and do everything else that a pastor is supposed to do for his flock.

"In the Lord's eye, I believe I am now a complete child of God who just needs to grow and develop. There is so much to know about Him" said Padim.

Looking back, Padim said there was no comparison with what he earns today to his high-paying job as a PBA player.

But there's no regret whatsoever.

"Here I lived by faith alone."

Mayol gets crack at WBC titlist Kyowa May 6

Salven L. Lagumbay

TOP-RANKED WORLD BOXING COUNCIL MINImumweight contender Rodel Mayol challenges reigning title-holder Eagle Kyowa in a potentially explosive 12-round encounter on May 6 at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo.

The collision between two of the world's finest small men will mark Mayol's first crack at the WBC title. Mayol has an unblemished 22-0 record against the Japan-based Kyowa, a Thai who has lost just once in 16 fights.

Oriental Pacific Boxing Federation bantam king Malcolm Tuñacao clashes with Japanese Yasuo Kijima in his second defense of the regional title in the other half of the double championship card.

Tuñacao will parade a 19-1-3 win-draw-loss record with 13 KOs in his 12-round fight against Kijima.

An interesting sidelight to both fights is the fact that the four fights are handled by two Japanese. Mayol and Tuñacao are managed by Tokyo businessman Yasuo Matsuoka, while Kyowa and Kijima belong to the Kadoebi Jewel stables.

Mayol relinquished the OPBF's 105-lb crown to pursue a world title shot. He earned the right to challenge Kyowa after stopping Lorenzo Trejo in the fourth round recently.

AGSB retains overall crown

THE ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (AGSB) retained the overall championship in the recent 2006 Inter-MBA Friendship Games when it downed University of Santo Tomas, 90-77, to clinch their best-of-three basketball title series. AGSB also won in badminton, billiards, bowling and chess in the games also featuring the Asian Institute of Management, De La Salle University and San Beda College. In grand fashion, AGSB also romped away with the gold in badminton, billiards, bowling and chess. Women's volleyball settled for third place finishing behind UST and DLSU, respectively. Team AGSB lived up to its early billing as the team to beat with the presence of talented players led by basketball players Marco Benitez who was named most valuable player, Dexter Pagtulingan, Young Gegorio, Bajie Del Rosario, Darwin Tuazon and Paul Comsti.

Baguio Country Club hosts Samsung Tour kick-off April 25-28

THE SHORT BUT CHALLENGING BAGUIO Country Club will host the kickoff leg of the fifth season of the popular Samsung Amateur Golf Tour on April 25-28.

The Baguio Country Club leg will serve as the first of five elimination stops in various courses around the country leading to the grand finals where all division champions will see action.

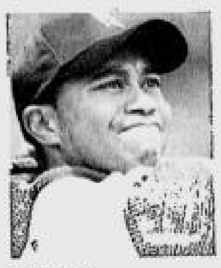
Also in the calendar are qualifying legs at the Summit Point in Lipa, Batangas on May 16-19, Rancho Palos Verdes in Mandug, Davao City on June 15-18, Splendido Taal on Aug. 8-11 and Del Monte in Cawayanon, Bukidnon.

The national finals will be hosted again by the Mt. Malarayat Golf Club in Lipa, Batangas, on Nov. 7-10.

Backed chiefly by Samsung Phils., the Samsung Tour is the only series in the country which features gross competitions in different handicap classifications for men and ladies. It is also sponsored by Titleist, Taylor Made, C-Lium Fiber, Microtel and Custom Clubmakers/KZG, Sunbolt with Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9 and 99.5 RT, Sports Plus as media partners.

For inquiries and other tournaments, contact the Professional Management Group at 635-0010, fax 631-5768 or 0917-8121242.

Tiger returns home to care for ailing father


WOODS

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—WITH THE US MASters behind him, Tiger Woods returned home to more important business on Monday—the failing health of his father Earl.

With his dad back home in California battling cancer and too fragile to travel, a concerned Woods made his first visit to the Augusta National Golf Club last week without his mentor.

Although Woods downplayed the impact his father's absence had on his concentration, the world number one occasionally appeared distracted during his green jacket defense, finishing in a tie for third three shots back of winner Phil Mickelson.

In fact, the 70th Masters may well be remembered as one Woods let slip away behind uncharacteristically shaky putting, including a pair of missed eagle putts from inside 10-feet that effectively stalled a final round back-nine charge.

Later in the Georgia twilight as Woods helped Mickelson slip into his second green jacket, the 30-year-old American lamented his poor putting and the absence of his father.

"I'm sure he (Earl) was watching and a little mad at me for the way I putted today," Woods told reporters. "I'm sure he knew what I did wrong."

Since jetting across the country on the eve of the Players Championship in May in the hopes of giving his ailing father a lift, Woods has not displayed the dominating form he showed early in the campaign.

In the next few months he can be expected to ride an emotional roller coaster that will test his vaunted powers of concentration.

But Woods has insisted that he is well prepared for the tough times that lie ahead.

"Well, I've been dealing with it for years, so nothing's changed," Woods told reporters before the start of the year's first major. "It is what it is and you just deal with it. *Reuters*

Roddick takes shot at clay title

HOUSTON, TEXAS—ANDY RODdick, who won two singles matches to help the United States reach the Davis Cup semifinals, returns to defend his US Men's Clay Court Championship crown here this week.

A three-time champion here, Roddick is the top seed at the $380,000 event and will face Chilean Paul Capdeville in the first round.

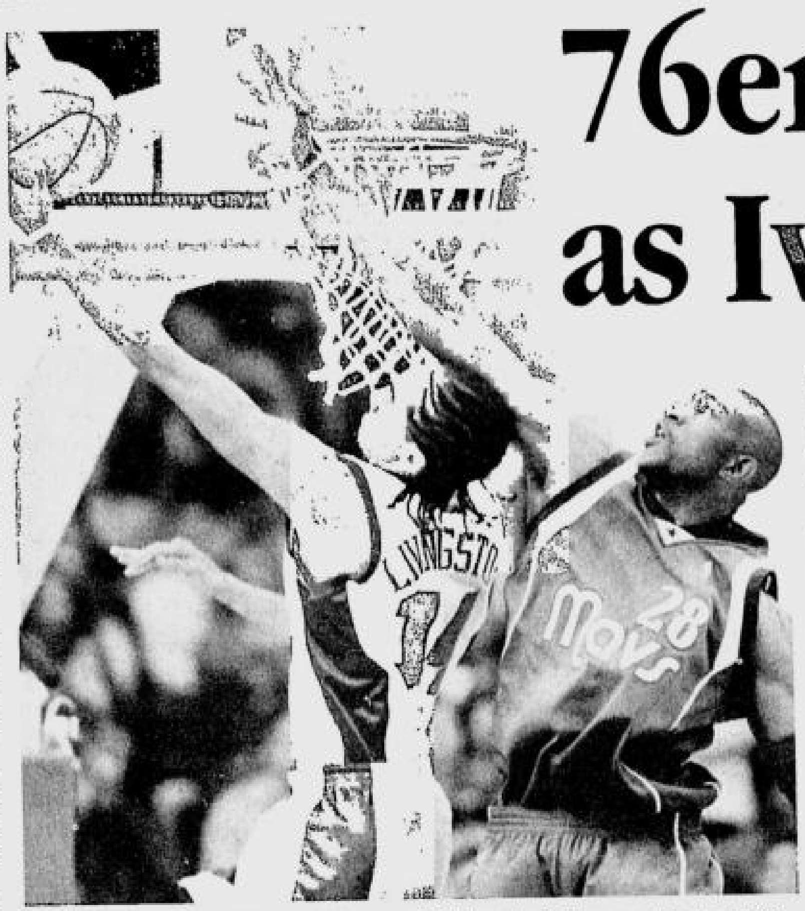
On Sunday, Roddick earned the clinching point over Chile with a four-set victory over Fernando Gonzalez on a grass court in Rancho Mirage, California.

Capdeville and Adrian Garcia won a total of seven games in three sets in falling to Americans Bob and Mike Bryan in the doubles on Saturday.

After Roddick clinched the tie for the Americans, Capdeville beat James Blake in the dead rubber.

Blake is the second seed here and will play a qualifier in the first round.

It was a short stay at the event for third-seeded American Robby Ginepri, who endured a 6-4, 6-4 loss to Spaniard Albert Montanes on Monday. *AFP*



LOS Angeles Clippers' Shaun Livingston (left) lays the ball up over the reach of Dallas Mavericks' Didier Ilunga-Mbenga of Congo during the first half of their NBA game in Los Angeles, Monday. AP

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1-(Tri)-Consiglieri (5), Nature Chef (4), Regal King (2)
Race 2-(Qrt/Tri)-Fly Aday Fly (7), She Boom (5), Nico's Incharge (1), Beat D'Heat (6)
Race 3-(Penta/Qrt/Tri)-Chabacana (1), Tervalac (8), Step On The Gas (6), Diplomatic Bull (5), Uncle (4)
Race 4-(Qrt/Tri)-Lord Gold (3), King Of Africa (1), Bear Cat (6), Fighting Jack (5)
Race 5-(Qrt/Tri)-Ocean Cookie (2), The Dominator (6), War General (7), Dona Gelay (4)
Race 6-(Penta/Qrt/Tri)-Western Dancer (8), Astimegoesby (6), Joke Only (2), Power Of The Wind (7), Men Of Honor (9)
Race 7-(Qrt/Tri)-Zaniga (6), Hello Junior (3), Modern Spirit (4), Real Tough (1)
Race 8-(Qrt/Tri)-Juanito's Dream (4), Daog (5), Strong Jays (7), Real Precious (3)
Race 9-(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)-St. Emilion (10), Rindo Maker (9), Danielle's Angel (7), Heart Of The Wind (2), West Swinger (6), Born Perfect (3)

76ers stay on hunt as Iverson delivers

NEW YORK—ALLEN IVERSON LED THE Philadelphia 76ers back into the final Eastern Conference playoff spot with a 105-97 win over the Washington Wizards in National Basketball Association play on Monday.

Iverson had 26 points and 15 assists and Kyle Korver added 20 points off the bench for the Sixers, who have rediscovered their form to get back into the hunt for the final playoff spot.

The Sixers won their second straight game and now lead the Chicago Bulls by half a game for the last spot.

Stephen Hunter also had 20 points for Philadelphia and played a key role replacing the injured Chris Webber.

Andre Iguodala added 19 points for the 76ers, who had lost 13 of their last 17 games before defeating the Bulls in Chicago on Saturday.

Washington (39-38) lie fifth in the East after the loss, but the Wizards are only two games ahead of Indiana and Milwaukee with five games to play.

Philadelphia trailed 54-50 at halftime but the Sixers then took over, cutting the Wizards lead to just one point after three quarters and outscoring Washington 28-19 in the fourth quarter.

COMPLETE RESULTS: Orlando 105, Atlanta 88; Indiana 101, NY Knicks 82; Philadelphia 105, Washington 97; Cleveland 103, n.o./Oklahoma City 101; Utah 85, Houston 83; Denver 110, Portland 96; Dallas 75, LA Clippers 73.

SOLAR Sports will air the Minnesota-Memphis tussle at 8 a.m. today. It will be replayed tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. Sportsplus will air the 10:30 a.m. – Golden State-LA Lakers encounter at 10:30 a.m. with a replay at 7 p.m. The Seattle-San Antonio game will be shown at 9:30 p.m. with a replay tomorrow at 2:30 p.m. *Reuters*

HOUSTON Rockets center Yao Ming leaves the locker room in crutches after breaking his left foot against the Utah Jazz. AP

Pasuc National Olympics open Monday

THE PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF STATE Universities and Colleges (Pasuc) opens its first National Sports Olympics on Monday at the Marikina Sports Park before several other venues host various events in the next four days.

A total of 1,500 athletes from state-owned tertiary-level institutions will participate in the event.

They will see action in athletics, badminton, baseball, basketball, boxing, chess, dance sport, football, lawn tennis, sepak takraw, softball, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo and volleyball.

The three competing delegations are the Luzon Association of State Universities (Lasuc), Visayas Association of State Universities and Colleges (Vasuc) and the Mindanao Association of State Colleges and Universities Foundation (Mascuf).

Venues of the sports events are the Marikina Sports Park for athletics, basketball, football, sepak takraw, swimming, table tennis and taekwondo, while baseball will be played at the Sto. Nino diamond in Marikina City.

Boxing will be held at the Rizal Memorial Stadium in Manila, while softball and volleyball will be at the Marist School, Marikina Heights. Lawn tennis will be at the Tony Santos Shell Courts in Marikina.

A cheerdancing championship contest will be the highlight of the closing ceremonies on April 20.

"The event aims to provide opportunities for college students all over the country to be able to participate in sports," said Pasuc president Dr. Eldigario R. Gonzales.

Dr. Jose Macaballug, president of Rizal University, is the overall chair of the event.

Elorde beats Pacquiao in two crucial tests

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THE POET CESAR RUIZ AQUINO WANTED to know if an Elorde video is available on CD or DVD.

Quite doubtful, he was informed.

Aquino, a professor of literature at the Silliman U in Dumaguete, felt intrigued. He wanted to check what old fight fans had told him that Da Flash was more delightful to watch than Muhammad Ali--"Si Delon nga, ang sabi mas maganda daw tingnan si Flash kay Ali."

Ali might be a true delight, he was told, but Flash Elorde was purer, nothing fancy, nothing put-on, whatsoever.

One small clarification first: Your reporter here can't claim he knows Elorde the way he has come to know Manny Pacquiao, the super warrior.

But please don't take this to mean that Elorde's greatness was merely hearsay.

The bulk of the Elorde legend was molded in our heart through what we would read about his big fights in the old Manila Times the morning after.

Television was practically non-existent during those boyhood years, but we also savored blow-by-blow accounts of Elorde's battles over the radio.

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Truth is we took heart to assure our poet-friend about the valor and purity of Elorde only after having seen film clips of Da Flash's epic twin fights against Sandy Saddler, the former world 126-pound king also infamously dubbed as the Pike-like Featherweight.

The clips, in black and white of course, were featured during the Elorde Memorial Awards night at Dusit Hotel last March 25 through the efforts of broadcaster Ronnie Nathanielsz, a one time Elorde confidante.

It was chance encounter with greatness. In attending the award rites for the first time, we readily confirmed what we had been hearing through the years in boxing circles.

Yes, big and sensational as Pacquiao has become, it would not be easy to put him a notch higher than Elorde in the area of skills and all-around boxing prowess.

Paquiao handlers may not like what we would suggest, but the RP boxing super hero has some solid lessons to learn from Elorde.

***

Pacquiao, being the main awardee that night, must've himself seen the clips.

But if he happened to be busy posing with fans or signing autographs, he could reward himself with a review of the Elorde-Saddler fight tape.

That great battle in San Francisco, California in the late 50s was already a rematch, Elorde having shamed and beaten Saddler in Manila previously.

The rematch was as awesome, sensational as the Pacquiao rematch with Erik Morales in value and impact.

The world title was at stake. Elorde, despite Saddler lacing him with both elbows, cutting him freely with headbutts while rubbing open gloves over the wounds, was well on his way to repeating over Saddler.

Seeing no escape for the champion, the referee, after having shamelessly allowed the assorted infractions, halted the bout and declared Elorde loser by technical decision.

As could be expected, the referee was banned for life. He had nullified what could've been one of the greatest wins in prizefight history.

All told, it's easy to say now that Pacquiao, with the intoxicating impact of his knockout win over Morales last January, has deposed Elorde as the greatest Filipino boxer.

Greater, yes. However, it would be unfair to rank Pacquiao a better fighter than Elorde.

Pacquiao also has a lot to learn from Da Flash when it comes to being a true gentleman.

Life outside the boxing ring is an entirely different bout.

2 RP teams join WAITGC leg in Sabah

TWO TEAMS FROM THE PHILIPPINES WILL join the second of six qualifying rounds for the World Amateur Inter-Team Golf Championship (WAITGC) on April 17-20 at the Sabah Golf and Country Club in Sabah, Malaysia.

Pablo Soon, Wack Wack Golf and Country Club's sports and games committee chair, heads one team along with fellow club members Lorenzo Teng, Lito Valdez, and Tony Limheng.

The other RP squad is composed of Orchard's William Lim, and Malarayat's Mark Mendoza, Michael Mendoza and Gerald Katigbak.

"We prepared hard for this. We will give it our best shot," said Soon.

The winning team gets a chance to play in the grand finals set in Selangor, Malaysia, in September along with the champions of the other legs.

Now on its 13th edition, the annual WAITGC tournament is being organized by Tourism Malaysia with The Golf Club Managers Association of Malaysia as the sanctioning body.

Registration for the next four legs is ongoing. Interested Philippine clubs may contact the WAITGC secretariat at (603) 5633-2079, or through Pablo Soon 723-6480/9341 or Adrian Flores (0920-3948623).

SPORTSWATCH

Tabilog backs up Acca chessfest

THE ACCA CHESSFEST RESUMES ON APRIL 22 ON THE FOURTH FLOOR of Pearl Plaza Mall in Parañaque City. Tournament director and organizer Ricky Navalta said the event is being supported by chess patron and businessman Loren Tabilog of Tabilog Cargo Philippines and Chess Class 149 Computer Cafe. The event, dubbed as the fourth Saturday tournament, reels off at 1 p.m. and is open to all players aged 14 and under. The non- master tournament is open to all players with a rapid rating of 2050 below. Meanwhile, Ferdinand Reyes of Bloomfield Academy (Las Piñas City) ruled last month's kiddies tournament. For inquiries, call 893-8501 (Ricky Navalta) or text 09186966581 (Robert Suelo).

JVC Pampanga badminton listing ends

ACTION IN THE JVC REGIONAL BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS RESUMES next week with the staging of the second leg in Pampanga where close to 300 participants are vying for honors at the Excel Badminton Center. Registration for the event slated April 18-22 ends today, according to the organizing IMG. Fees are pegged at P100 for single entry event and P150 for those playing in two or three events. For details, check website at www.jvcbadminton.com or e-mail at jvcbadminton@hotmail.com or call 0917-8050702 (Tonette); 0917-8050601 (Carol); 0917-5288970 (Nelson).

Calderon tops CSI-Clark leg

JOEL CALDERON OF TEAM SPORTS RADIO TOPPED THE FOURTH LEG OF the Philamlife Cycling Search Invitational (CSI) Criterium Race at the parade grounds of Clark Field in Pampanga over the weekend. Calderon sustained his fine start in the 30-lap run, flashing sprinting prowess and superb staying power to beat Bernard Luzon of San Leonardo Cycling Group and third leg winner Victor Espiritu of Philippine Army in the centerpiece men's elite and under-23 class. Calderon amassed 29 points to emerge the fourth champion in as many legs of this event sponsored by Pagcor, PCSO, PLDT, Aktivade Thirst Quencher, Monterey, Air21, PhilCycling, Partas, Speed Detergent Bar and Powder, and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Sabungero Magasin derby at San Juan

WITH MORE THAN 40 CONFIRMED ENTRIES, THE SABUNGERO MAGASIN 4-Cock Derby looms as another blockbuster of San Juan Coliseum when action resumes on Monday, April 17. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Hosted by Neil Tuazon of Sabungero Magasin and supported by SJC management, the tourney stakes a guaranteed prize of P400,000. Participants must submit entries on Sunday from 2-9 p.m. and may call the SJC office: 725-5369 or 0917-8064758 (Neil). Meanwhile, the first ever SJC 9-Cock International Derby is slated on June 5, 7 and 9 with P5 million in guaranteed prize. The SJC management announced that 50 percent of derby proceeds will be divided among all participants.

Makati 'Salpukan': 300 entries listed

DERBYSISTS HAVE TWO MORE WEEKS OF PREPARATION FOR THE SUMmer Salpukan 6-Cock Derby which will blast off at Makati Coliseum on April 26. Sponsor is Complexor 3000. The total number of pledged entries is nearing the 300 mark as of yesterday, according to promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. The big number of entries is attributed to the guaranteed prize of P4.4 million for an entry fee of P11,000. Two brand-new Totoya cars (Vios and Altis) will go to the fastest win winners. For info, call 896-3545 and 895-6475.

NATIONAL Golf Association of the Philippines president Leandro Mendoza (seventh from right) joins skipper Pablo Soon and members of the two Philippine teams competing in the World Amateur Inter-Team Golf Championship. Also shown are William Lim, Mark Mendoza, Michael Mendoza, Gerald Katigbak, Noel Cruz, Lorenzo Teng, George Briones and Lito Valdez.

20th year
PETRON
Lakbay Alalay
Fuel Journeys.

LAKBAY ALALAY 2006

Motorists' friend on the road

By Marlet D. Salazar

ROADS LEADING OUTSIDE OF METRO Manila are at its heaviest during Holy Week when families and friends go on vacation. The volume of vehicles doubles during this time of the year.

Petron Corp. has provided motorists with an unparalleled comprehensive roadside assistance for the past 20 years. Lakbay Alalay 2006 is gearing up for yet another opportunity to help motorists and travelers plying the major expressways.

Petron's Lakbay Alalay is a pioneering roadside assistance program of the oil company which officially began in 1987. However, the idea was actually conceptualized and tested since two years earlier.

"People already know about Lakbay and they look forward to seeing us on the road," said Steven Acayan, training officer in Reseller Trade of Petron Corp. "People have learned to trust us and our partners during this time."

Campsites were set up on roadsides in case of motoring and medical emergencies. Lakbay Alalay camps are seen exclusively in North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), and Star Tollway. Its major stations in these areas also serve as Express Centers and offer the same services as in the camps.

Together with its partners which have increased over the years, Lakbay Alalay has expanded its services to motorists and travelers to include free drinking water, free emergency phone calls, rest room facilities, traffic report updates via its radio station partners, towing services and the other service staples like minor repairs by roving mechanics and especially first aid.

Lakbay Alalay 2006 is gearing up for yet another opportunity to help motorists and travelers plying the major expressways

STEVEN Acayan, training officer in Reseller Trade of Petron Corp

In the NLEX, Lakbay Alalay camp is located at the Sta. Rita Exit. In SLEX, the camp is set up at Silangan. The Petron station at the Star Tollway will serve as the campsite for the rest of the Holy Week.

To reiterate its concern over the safety of motorists especially during this time and to remind people of what good preventive maintenance can do, Petron also offers free safety checks of vehicles weeks before travelers head for their different destinations. This free service is available in participating Petron service stations until April 16 (Easter Sunday). Safety checks include inspection of the vehicle's running condition, its brakes, oil, radiator, and tires.

In this way, vacationers, pilgrims, or homebound travelers are assured of having a comfortable trip to their point of destination.

According to Acayan, the motorists' awareness on safe travel has heightened. "If I remember right, during the old NLEX and SLEX, the number of accidents happening is almost comparable."

Nowadays, the incidents are fewer although the same problems like cooling, flat tire, and breaks still occur. This can still be prevented by having the vehicle thoroughly checked before the day of the travel.

Lakbay Alalay has nurtured long-time partnerships with other companies which include the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC), Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), Traffic Management Center (TMC), Star Tollways, PNCC Skyway Corp., the Petron Dealers Association, and sponsors like Smart Communications, McDonald's, the Philippine National Red Cross, BioActive Fuel Enhancer, Ibero Assistencia, and KIA.

"They (partners and sponsors) see that we know what we are doing," Acayan said.

Every year, many of the people that are involved in the project, particularly the team leaders, assigned to different camps are already familiar with the ins and outs of the program.

"They know what to do because we've been doing this for the longest time," he added. "We just remind them of what's new for the year or update them on some small details but basically everybody understands the concept."

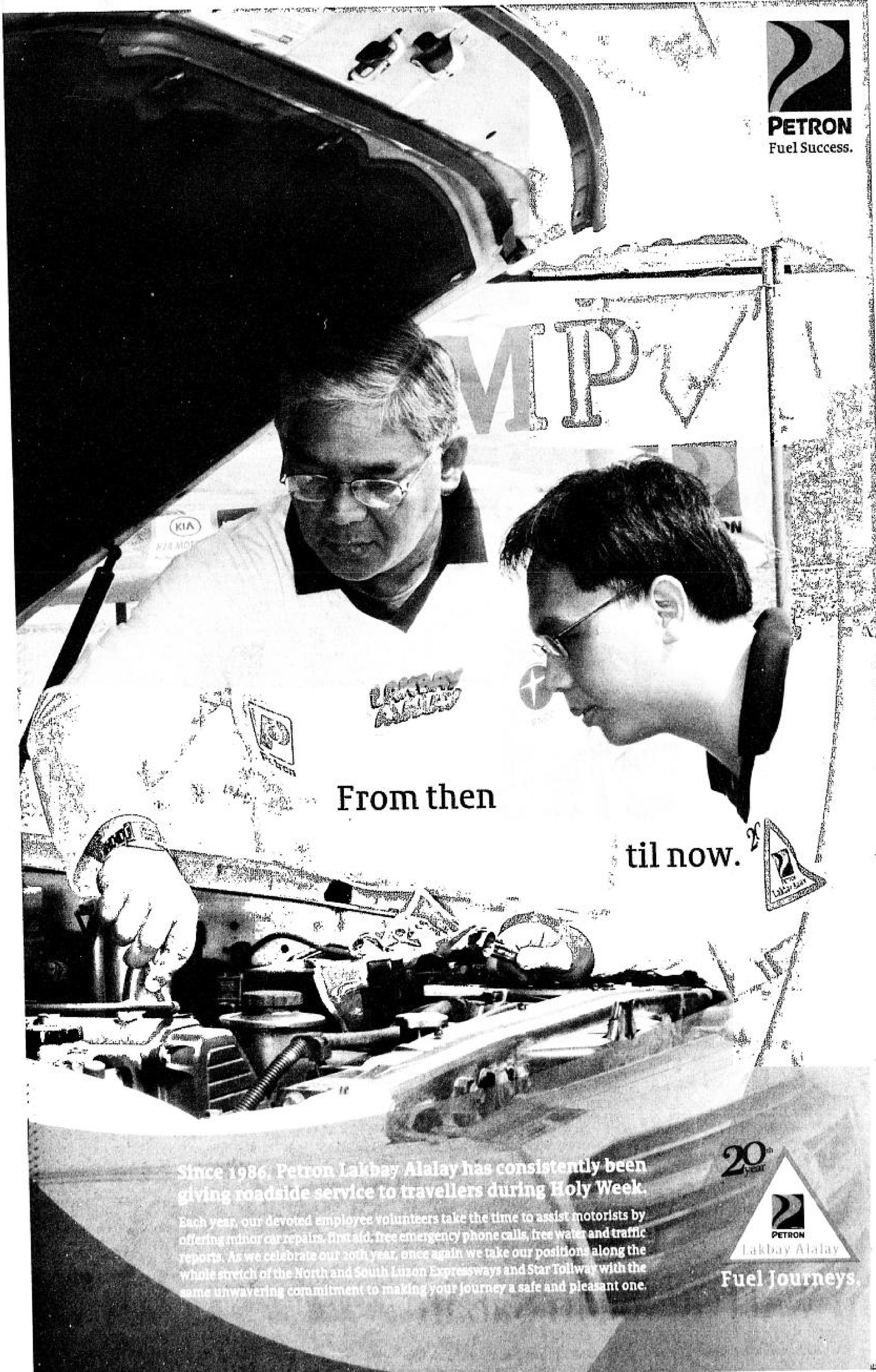
Petron employees from different departments have invaluably volunteered their services every year. More than 100 people help out man the campsites in the three expressways for the entire four days (from Holy Wednesday to Easter Sunday except Good Friday).

"We advocate volunteerism among our employees," Acayan said. "They don't get anything in return and the most they get are T-shirt and cap."

"But the joy of having helped another soul or family on the road is something no amount of money can buy," he added. "Also, it is our own way of giving back to our patrons, and thanking them of their continued trust with us."

"Also, part of this program is not only helping but making safety a priority not only for vacationers but also for our own team."

Petron's Lakbay Alalay, having been the first to offer such program, "has become the most comprehensive roadside assistance during Holy Week," said Acayan, who has seen the program grow over the years.



Since 1986, Petron Lakbay Alalay has consistently been giving roadside service to travellers during Holy Week.

Each year, our devoted employee volunteers take the time to assist motorists by offering minor car repairs, first aid, free emergency phone calls, free water and traffic reports. As we celebrate our 20th year, once again we take our positions along the whole stretch of the North and South Luzon Expressways and Star Tollway with the same unwavering commitment to making your journey a safe and pleasant one.

PNCC
TOLLWAYS MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
MNTC
STAR TOLLWAY CORPORATION
SMART 3G
BIOACTIVA
KIA MOTORS
DZRH
DZMM
DZBB 594

A hero's welcome for Marky Cielo

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BONTOC, MT. PROVINCE—MARKY CIELO, "ultimate survivor" of the "Starstruck" reality TV search on GMA 7, returned to his native province last week amid a welcome fit for a hometown hero.

The 17-year-old Cielo graced the Lang-Ay Festival here on Friday, when various tribes gathered "to celebrate unity and cooperation"

MARKY/A2-2

HE WORE a traditional headgear, but not a G-string. PHOTOS BY EV ESPIRITU

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3	EIGHT BELOW	12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00	GP
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2 ICE AGE 2
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

3 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

4 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00

5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

6 SHE'S THE MAN
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8 BANDIDAS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

9 JUST FRIENDS
1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

10 BASIC INSTINCT 2
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5.00 7:30 10:00

3 JUST FRIENDS 12:00 1:40 3:20
BASIC INSTINCT 2 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 BANDIDAS
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6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
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12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

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1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

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12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:15

3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00

4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

5 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
11:00 1:00 4:00 6:00 9:00

6 BASIC INSTINCT 2
12.00 2:20 4:40 7:00 9:15

7 BANDIDAS
12:00 2:20 4:40 7:00 9:15

8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
11:40 2:00 4:20 6 40 9:00

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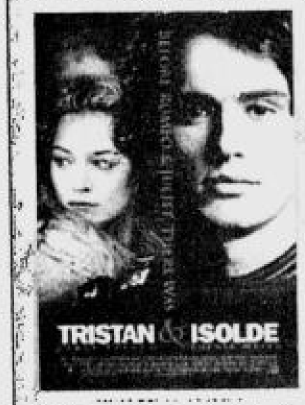

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3 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT
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2 NAG AAPOY NA DAGAT
3 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
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2 ICE AGE-2
3 VENOM
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

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2 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

From page A2-1

through traditional dances, songs and rituals.

Saying he was proud to have broken into mainstream show business, Cielo admitted he feels the pressure to be a role model for young Igorots.

"People look up to me now," he told reporters.

Residents of Bauko, Cielo's hometown, butchered pigs by way of preparing a feast for him. The main roads were draped with welcome streamers.

Native dishes

Cielo told his hosts that he had missed eating the local delicacies *pinikpikan* (a native chicken soup dish), *etag* (salted and dried pork) and *dinengdeng* (a vegetable dish).

He performed on the grounds of the Mt. Data Hotel on Thursday. The next morning, he joined the cultural parade.

Cielo's mother Mildred said her son decided to join the festival to thank provincemates who had supported him with text votes during the competition.

A team from GMA 7 documented the festive homecoming.

No G-string

Cielo did not wear a G-string during the fest, but donned a native vest and headgear.

"We are grateful to Marky [in return]," said Gov. Maximo Dalog in a short program during the festival opening. "His [achievement] is historic [for us here in] Mt. Province." I am sure that our young people [would follow Marky's example and] work harder for their dreams."

During the Sen. Edgardo Angara, festival guest speaker, cited Cielo as "the pride not only of Cordillerans but of all Filipinos."

FEEDBACK

Thanks, Ruben

From Joy Membreve Jamago (jamago@uiuc.edu):

Happy Anniversary, Mr. Nepales, and congratulations!

Let me know when you plan to retire. I would like to have the best job in the world.

From Edelveiss Canada (edelveiss_canada@yahoo.com):

Congratulations, Sir Ruben, on your first anniversary!

I hope you never get tired of sharing with us all your experiences and interviews with our Hollywood idols and your *kumustahan* with *kababayan* who make it big there.

I admire you for your humility and pride in being Filipino.

It is us who should be thanking you and not the other way around. *Mababaw lang po ang luha ko at talagang na-touch po ako sa* April 19 column ninyo.

Mabuhay po kayo!

A drift of wood and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: HOW OLD ARE YOU?

Guest: I'm 33 going on 33!

(So, that makes you—33!)

* * *

Newscaster: Here's breaking news: *Bumalik na po sa Pilipinas si Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales!*

(Archbishop *na*, cardinal *pa*?)

* * *

Host: Why do you like to sing and dance when it's so far from your work in broadcast journalism?

Guest: I like it, because it breaks the monotonous.

(Ah, so...)

* * *

Host: What is your reaction to the insults hurled against you by your critics?

Guest: I don't pay any attention to them—it just shows their inmaturity!

(Inmaturity? *Bago 'yon, a...*)

* * *

Host: How old were you when you first started singing?

Guest: I was already performing on the top of the table at the edge of only two years old!

(It's a good thing you didn't fall off the table's "edge"—!)

* * *

Host: What kind of movies do you like watching?

Guest: I proudly admit, I'm a horror film aficiano!

(One man's aficionado is another man "aficiano"!)

* * *

Host: What does your new beauty treatment do?

Guest: It feeds the skin and the hair with fresh harmones for youth and vibrancy!

(What in the world are "harmones"—hormones that harm?)

* * *

Host: You mean, aside from the skin, it will also benefit the hair?

Guest: Yes, it's for good her treatment!

(—But not for him, huh?)

* * *

Host: Why did you choose him for your boyfriend, from all of your many other suitors?

Guest: Because I discovered that, with him, I feel most amcomfortable!

(—Good for you!)

* * *

Host: Why do we have to use so many lotions on our hair?

Guest: *Para maging ma-*shine *ang iyong buhok!*

(Sige na nga...)

* * *

Host: How effective is this herbal treatment against inflammation?

Guest: Very effective. *Minsan*, my friend had *namamagang* organ. After he took this herbal treatment, *nawala ang kanyang namamagang* organ!

(*Nawala ang pamamaga—pati* organ?)

* * *

Host: What do we have lined up for our viewers?

Co-host: Our special guest today is an expert who will share some important energy plan-saving tips!

(Ano daw?)

* * *

Host: How was your town's religious image first discovered?

Guest: Based on our old people's stories, it was first discovered floating in the sea as a drift of wood!

(A drift of wood? How—poetic!)

Movie on TV

ON HBO today at 6 p.m., "The Enemy Within." Tomorrow at 9:30 p.m., "Mermaids." 2:45 p.m., "Biloxi Blues." 6 p.m., "Big Fish." 8 p.m., "Rome 4: Stealing from Saturn." 9 p.m., "Rome 5: Tha ram Has Touched the Wall." 9:50 p.m., "Rome 6: Egeria." April 14 at 7:20 p.m., "Gothika." 9 p.m, "True Lies." 12:50 a.m., "Catch 22."

On Cinemax today at 1 p.m., "Beetlejuice." April 13 at 9:50 a.m., "The Adventures of Brisco County Jr." 11:30 a.m., "Mystic River." April 14 at 6:30 a.m., "Phantom of the Rue Morgue." 8 p.m., "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story."

POC Auditions

THE PHILIPPINE Opera Company announces auditions on April 22 (2-5 p.m.) for its 2006 opera and concert season, at the fifth floor, SJG Centre, 8463 Rockwell Drive, corner Don Pedro, Makati. Call 8958097.

Atsushi and Kimura Toshimitsu will conduct the auditions for "Operanow 2," which will also be a search for young Filipino classical singers who can vie for a music scholarship in Japan.

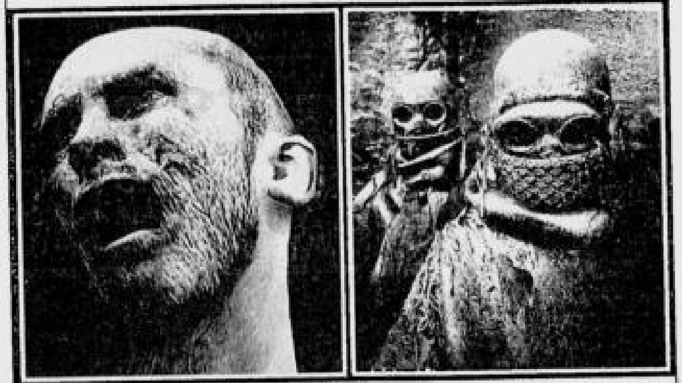
On Nickelodeon Channel

But what are 'fresh harmones'?

STARTING April 17, spend Mondays with the wacky "Fairly Odd Parents," Tuesdays with the magical "Trolz," Wednesdays with the gregarious "All Grown Up" team, Thursdays with "Danny Phantom," and Fridays with "Jimmy Nuetron." For other highlights, log on to www.nicksplat.com.

SUMMER 2006'S FIRST BIG MOVIE WILL SOON HIT THE SCREENS

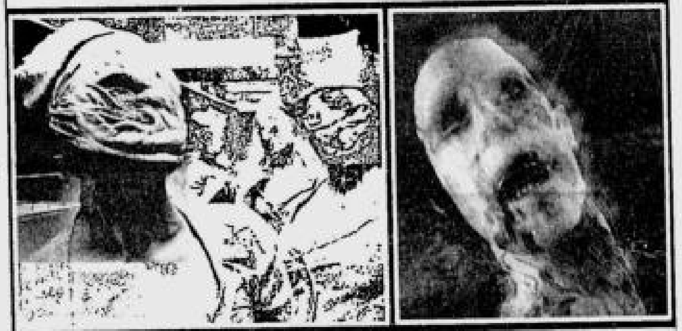
SILENT HILL's CHAMBERS OF HORROR



Welcome Hollywood's first giant summer movie SILENT HILL. Under the imaginative direction of Christophe Gans, TriStar's $100M budgeted action/horror film SILENT HILL is based upon the popular horror survival videogame series published by Konami.

Visually stunning special effects were created by acclaimed FX wizard Patrick Tatopoulos. Embodying the terror of Silent Hill is a panoply of vividly creepy entities: the relentlessly destructive, sword-wielding *RED PYRAMID*, the harrowing *GREY CHILDREN*, the *ARMLESS ONES*, the mysterious *JANITOR*, the *COCKROACHES* and the *DARK NURSES*.

While the Cockroaches were entirely computer-generated images, Red Pyramid began as a Patrick Tatopoulos' design. "We stayed very close to the images in the game, but for me, it was all about proportions and elegance," explains Tatopoulos. "It's very simple: beautiful doesn't mean pretty. If you retain the elegance of the creature and some degree of humanity in the design, it becomes mesmerizing".



The Grey Child was Tatopolous' favorite project. The suit's posture accentuated the design of the infant's belly and sway back, but it was the face which held the creation's truest artistry. Adds Tatopoulos, "Grey Child's face is human, elongated, twisted, with the skin slipping back with a mouth stretching into an eternal howl."

Tatopoulos' design for the Armless One was intended to stress functionality for the performer. "Even though the Armless does not have a mouth, under his skin you can still feel his perpetual scream," explains Tatopolous. Finally, there were the Nurses, notable for their ashen uniforms, which seem to grow out of their skin, and a lack of features on their faces. Layered onto that image is their movement: marionette-like, frozen in time, coming to life when light appears in the darkness of the hospital.

The character of the Janitor was the living, crawling twisted being who appears in the Darkness. "The trick for Christophe was to have it still be visceral and disturbing, but something you can't take your eyes off. He doesn't want people to turn away. He wants people to be entranced, but have the same kind of horror in their eyes." —SHPN

ADVT.

ARANETA CENTER

Gateway
MALL
FarmersPlaza

THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY
Gateway CINEPLEX*10
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

EIGHT BELOW 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30
NANNY McPHEE 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40
MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50
GRANDMA'S BOY 2:10 / 9:30
BASIC INSTINCT 2 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50
BANDIDAS 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
SHE'S THE MAN 2:00 / 4:20
LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 7:30 / 9:50
TRISTAN & ISOLDE 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50
ICE AGE 2 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20
THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
EIGHT BELOW 1:25 / 3:55 / 6:25 / 8:55
ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P240/P299

MALL CINEMAS

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:00 R3 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
ICE AGE 2 12:15 R4 / 1:25 / 3:35 / 5:45 / 7:55
THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:10 R4 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30
BANDIDAS 12:15 R3 / 1:45 / 4:05 / 6:25 / 8:45
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

PBA PHILIPPINE CUP
Apr 16, Sun. 4:10 RED BULL vs ALASKA
6:30 TALK N TEXT vs AIR 21

SANTANA ROOTS... GREG ROLIE LIVE!
APRIL 28, Friday 8 pm

SM CINEMA
movietime
SM DIAL-A-MOVIE 833-0999*
CENTERstage
LIVE-LARGE
831-1000 loc. 2871, 2073, 2082, 2091
BIG MOVIES • BIG SHOWS • BIG EVENTS

Now you can see your child smile

Share a movie with a loved one with SM Cinema's
50% OFF
treat on your 2nd ticket!
Starts on March 15 to April 30, 2006
Mondays to Thursdays

share your child's excitements

MEGAMALL * STA. MESA * MANILA * PODIUM * FAIRVIEW * SOUTHMALL
NORTH EDSA * SAN LAZARO * STA. ROSA * PAMPANGA * BAGUIO * VALENZUELA
MARILAO * MOLINO** BATANGAS * LUCENA * CEBU * DAVAO* CAGAYAN DE ORO

**Promo starts on April 15 2006
MEDIA PARTNERS: 96.3WRocK iFM 93.9
PER DTI NCR PERMIT [illegible]

SNEAK PREVIEW movietime

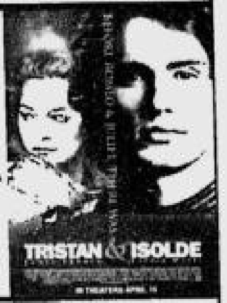
TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SNEAK PREVIEW on April 10, 11 and 12 at regular ticket prices

Watch it at the following branches:
Bacoor, Bicutan, Cebu, Dasmariñas, Fairview, Manila, Megamall, Molino, North EDSA Pampanga, San Lazaro, Southmall, Sta. Mesa, Sucat and Valenzuela

REGULAR SHOWING STARTS ON APRIL 15!

MTRCB Rating R-13
(Only aged 13 and above will be admitted)
Distributed by 20th Century Fox



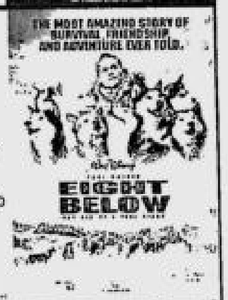
TRISTAN & ISOLDE

EIGHT BELOW

SNEAK PREVIEW on April 10, 11 and 12 at regular ticket prices at the following branches:

Bacoor, Baguio, Batangas, Bicutan, Cagayan De Oro, Cebu, Dasmariñas, Davao Fairview, Iloilo, Manila, Marilao, Megamall, Molino, North EDSA, Pampanga San Lazaro, Southmall, Sta. Mesa, Sta. Rosa, Sucat and Valenzuela

MTRCB Rating G OPENS APRIL 15 AT SM CINEMAS Distributed by



THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL, FRIENDSHIP AND ADVENTURE EVER TOLD.
EIGHT BELOW

METRO MANILA

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
CINEMA 2
ICE AGE 2

SM MEGACINEMA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 VENOM
4 RESERVED
5 SHE'S THE MAN
6 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
7 JUST FRIENDS
8 BANDIDAS
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 ICE AGE 2
11 ULTRAVIOLET
12 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 ULTRAVIOLET
6 VENOM
7 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
8 BANDIDAS

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
V FOR VENDETTA
JUST FRIENDS
FINAL DESTINATION 3
VENOM
MOMENTS OF LOVE
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
BANDIDAS
EIGHT BELOW
ICE AGE 2
SHE'S THE MAN
ULTRAVIOLET
NANNY McPHEE

SM CITY STA. MESA
ICE AGE 2
MOMENTS OF LOVE
EIGHT BELOW
BANDIDAS
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
VENOM
NANNY McPHEE
JUST FRIENDS
SHE'S THE MAN
ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY BICUTAN
EIGHT BELOW
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
MOMENTS OF LOVE
ICE AGE 2

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
ICE AGE 2
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
EIGHT BELOW
BANDIDAS
JUST FRIENDS
MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MANILA
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
BANDIDAS
JUST FRIENDS
ICE AGE 2
SHE'S THE MAN
EIGHT BELOW
V FOR VENDETTA
FINAL DESTINATION 3
MOMENTS OF LOVE
VENOM
ULTRAVIOLET
CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
ICE AGE 2
EIGHT BELOW
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
MOMENTS OF LOVE
VENOM
JUST FRIENDS
BANDIDAS
SHE'S THE MAN
CHINESE TALL STORY

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
ICE AGE 2
MOMENTS OF LOVE
EIGHT BELOW
TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY SUCAT
ICE AGE 2
EIGHT BELOW
MOMENTS OF LOVE
BANDIDAS

LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO
ULTRAVIOLET
EIGHT BELOW
SYRIANA
ICE AGE 2

SM CITY MARILAO
FINAL DESTINATION 3
MOMENTS OF LOVE
ICE AGE 2
EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY BACOOR
FINAL DESTINATION 3
VENOM
ICE AGE 2
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
EIGHT BELOW
MOMENTS OF LOVE
ULTRAVIOLET
BANDIDAS

SM CITY STA. ROSA
EIGHT BELOW
ULTRAVIOLET
MOMENTS OF LOVE
ICE AGE 2

SM CITY PAMPANGA
EIGHT BELOW
ULTRAVIOLET
BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
ICE AGE 2
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY LUCENA
HOUSE OF FURY
ICE AGE 2
V FOR VENDETTA
MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MOLINO
1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 EIGHT BELOW

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 ICE AGE
6 V FOR VENDETTA
7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM CITY ILOILO
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 RESERVED
3 ICE AGE 2
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 VENOM
7 RESERVED
8 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY DAVAO
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 NANNY McPHEE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 THE DARK
5 SYRIANA
6 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 RESERVED
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 ICE AGE 2

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ICE AGE 2
MTRCB: GP
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

2 BANDIDAS
MTRCB R-13 2:15, 4:35
BASIC INSTINCT 2
MTRCB R-18 7:20, 10:00

3 EIGHT BELOW
MTRCB GP
2.00, 4.40, 7:20, 10:00

4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
MTRCB: R-13
1.30, 4.20, 7.10, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
MTRCB PG-13 2.00, 4.40, 7.20, 10:00 LMF
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

Lenten Feature:
" PASSION OF THE CHRIST",
April 10 to 12 (Mon to Wed)
Premiere Theatre
P120.00 (without food and drinks)

Call 633-7851, loc. 171 or 633-2227
for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 **THE HILLS HAVE EYES** 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00 R13

CINEMA 2 **GRANDA'S BOY** 12:55, 3:15, 5:35, 7:55, 10:20 R13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 **BANDIDAS** 12:55, 3:15, 5:35, 7:55, 10:20 R13

CINEMA 4 **EIGHT BELOW/ TRISTAN & ISOLDE** 11:00, 1:45, 4:30 / 7:15, 10:00 GP/R13

CINEMA 5 **ICE AGE 2** 11:00, 1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8:00, 10:20 GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

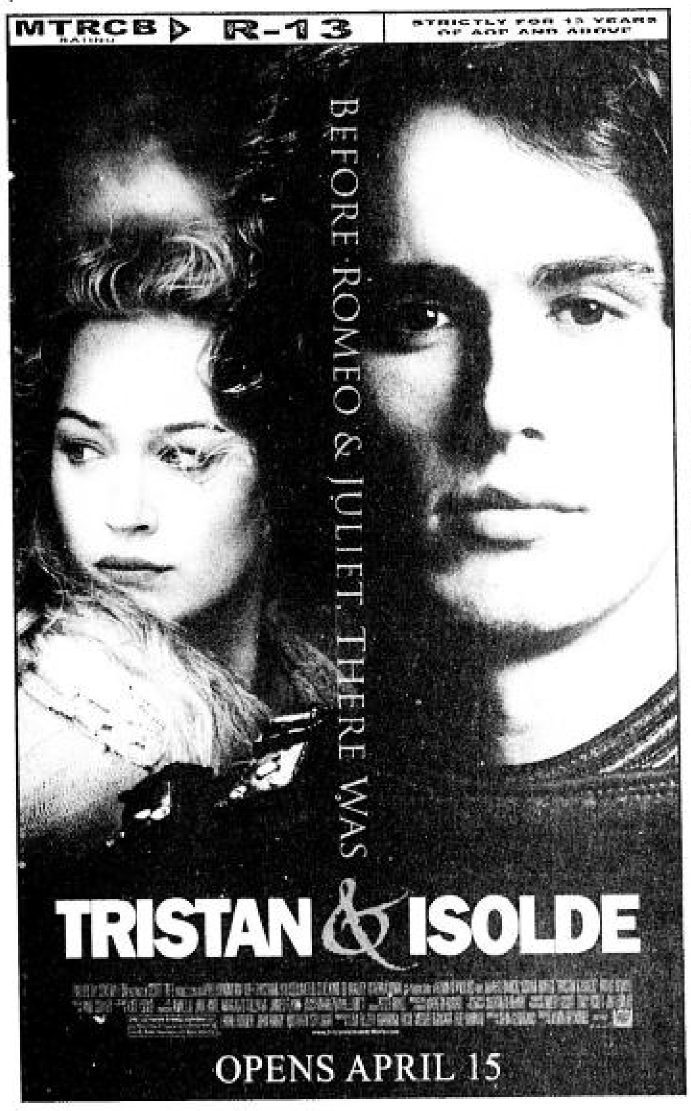
MUSIC MUSEUM	APRIL 26, 2006	FREESTYLE & POPS FERNANDEZ	8:00PM
	APRIL 27 & 28, 2006	WILLIE NEPOMUCENO	8:00PM
TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS	EVERY MONDAY APRIL 6,7,8,27,28, 29, 2006	TEATRINO DANCE NIGHT WERE STILL HOT "THE MUSICAL" FOR INQUIRIES CALL 722-4532 LOC. 116	7:00PM 9:00PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

HOLLYWOOD'S FIRST BIG SUMMER MOVIE FOR 2006

We've Been Expecting You
COMING SOON
SILENT HILL
Based on the #1 Survival Game from KONAMI

MTRCB RATING ▷ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE


BEFORE ROMEO & JULIET THERE WAS
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
OPENS APRIL 15

EXTREME ACTION EXPLODES ARPIL 15!

PG-13 CHILDREN BELOW 13 YRS OLD WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR ADULT

STEVEN SEAGAL
Terror has been launched undersea.
The Mission : Destroy the world's most advanced Submarine controlled by an army of brainwashed soldiers!!!
SUBMERGED
EUROIMAGE
Distributed by Solar Entertainment Corporation

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glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

THX

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1	GLORIETTA 1	THE HILLS HAVE EYES	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	EIGHT BELOW	MOMENTS OF LOVE			
G4	GLORIETTA 4	EIGHT BELOW	JUST FRIENDS	THX TRISTAN & ISOLDE 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	THE HILLS HAVE EYES	MOMENTS OF LOVE	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	BANDIDAS
GB1	GREENBELT 1	THE HILLS HAVE EYES	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN					
GB3	GREENBELT 3	THX EIGHT BELOW 12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	RENT 1:10, 3:45, 6:20, 8:55, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	TRISTAN & ISOLDE 12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX EIGHT BELOW	TRISTAN & ISOLDE	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	THE HILLS HAVE EYES	GRANDMA'S BOY		
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	NANNY MCPHEE	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	ULTRAVIOLET			
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	THE HILLS HAVE EYES	BANDIDAS	TRISTAN & ISOLDE	MOMENTS OF LOVE		

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Easter Bunny Special by Repertory Philippines April 16, 2006	Easter Fun at Town April 16, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	**MARKET! MARKET!**
Ayala Center Cebu's Easter Event & Kiddo's 1st Year Anniversary April 16, 2006	Cartoon Network Summer Camp April 22, 2006

GREENBELT — **Bossa Nova with SITTI**
April 19, 2006

GREENBELT Onstage — **Repertory Philippines presents TWO & TWO MAKE SEX**
at REP's Globe Theater - April 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, May 5, 6 & 7
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — **Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's**
Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

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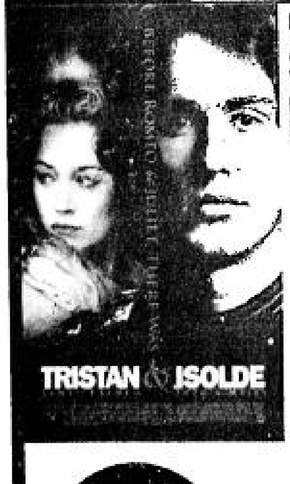

BEFORE ROMEO & JULIET THERE WAS
TRISTAN & ISOLDE

Be among the first to watch at regular admission price

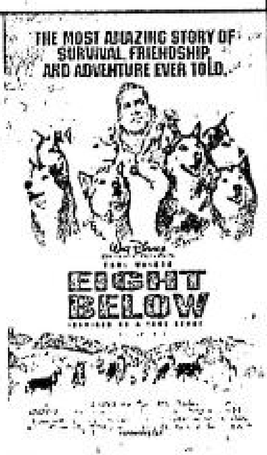
SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW

April 10 (Mon), 11 (Tue) & 12 (Wed)

GLORIETTA 1 & 4
GREENBELT 3
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
MARKET! MARKET!

MTRCB Rating:
TRISTAN & ISOLDE: Restricted 13
EIGHT BELOW: General Audience

20th Century Fox Buena Vista International Ayala Malls


THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL, FRIENDSHIP, AND ADVENTURE EVER TOLD.
Walt Disney
EIGHT BELOW

AYALA MALLS CINEMAS
Trippin' in 80 days

WANT TO BASK IN THE WHITE SANDY BEACHES OF PALAWAN FOR P90?

It's Easy! Join Ayala Cinemas' Trippin in 80 Days Raffle Promo and get a chance to win exciting all-expense paid trips to Cebu, Davao, and Palawan.

Get a coupon for every 2 tickets purchased at Glorietta and Greenbelt Cinemas and drop in dropboxes. Hurry! Watch a movie now!

Promo ends on May 19, 2006
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-200, Series of 2006

Special thanks to: Club Noah Cebu Pacific

glorietta Greenbelt Ayala Malls

CELEBRATE EASTER AT GLORIETTA WITH FUN ACTIVITIES AND PRIZES!

- * Face Painting
- * Balloon Twisting and Sculpturing
- * Easter Egg Painting
- * Easter Egg Hunt

PLUS

AN EASTER BUNNY SHOW BY REPERTORY PHILIPPINES

APRIL 16, 2006 2-5PM
GLORIETTA ACTIVITY CENTER

glorietta Ayala Malls

See leaflets for details. For inquiries please contact Customer Service at 752 7272.

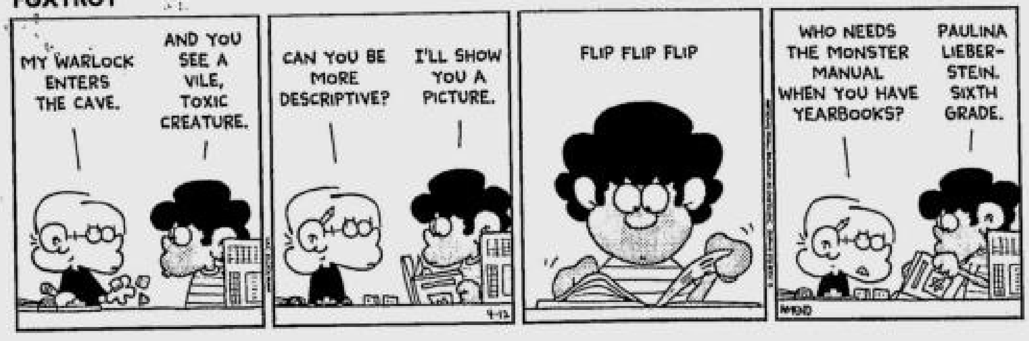
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

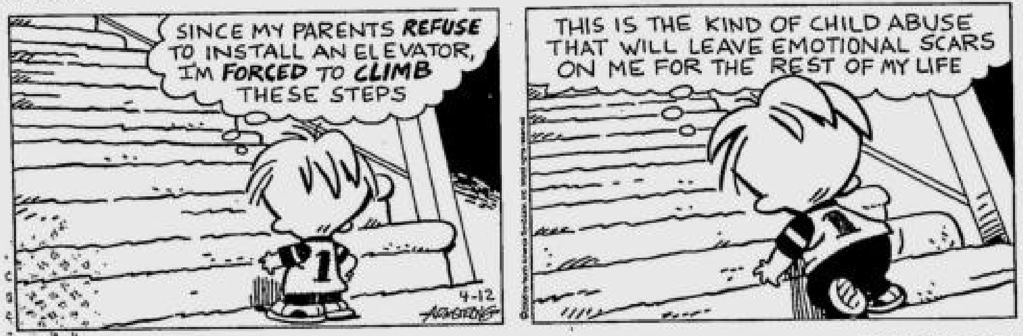
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


MY WARLOCK ENTERS THE CAVE.
AND YOU SEE A VILE, TOXIC CREATURE.
CAN YOU BE MORE DESCRIPTIVE?
I'LL SHOW YOU A PICTURE.
FLIP FLIP FLIP
WHO NEEDS THE MONSTER MANUAL WHEN YOU HAVE YEARBOOKS?
PAULINA LIEBERSTEIN. SIXTH GRADE.
4-12

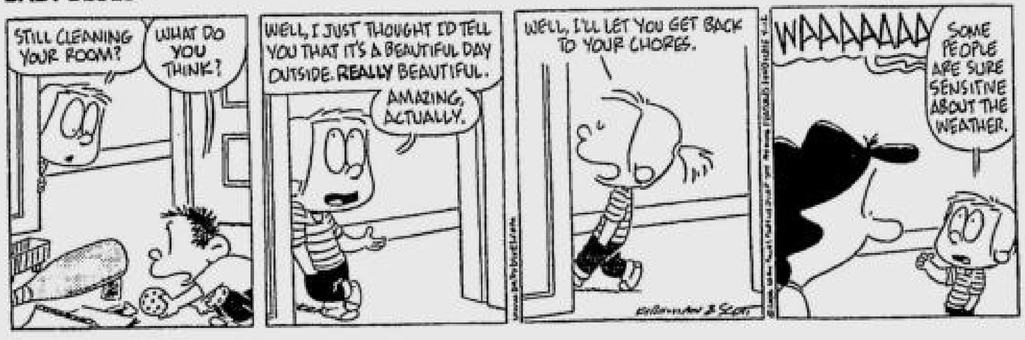
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SINCE MY PARENTS REFUSE TO INSTALL AN ELEVATOR, I'M FORCED TO CLIMB THESE STEPS
THIS IS THE KIND OF CHILD ABUSE THAT WILL LEAVE EMOTIONAL SCARS ON ME FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE
4-12
ARMSTRONG

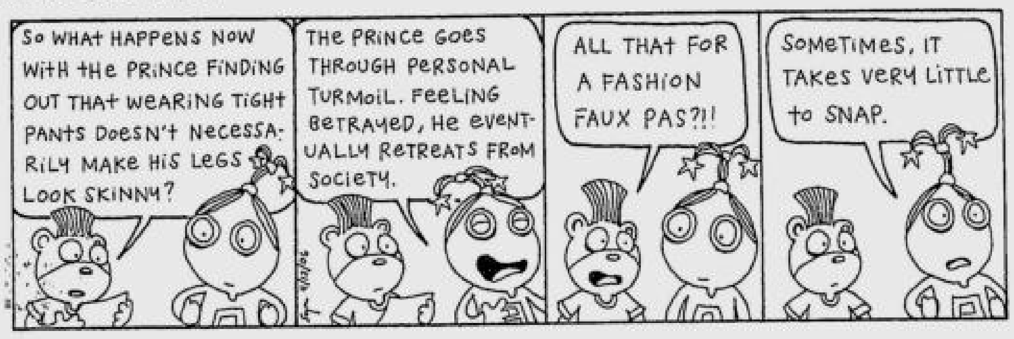
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


STILL CLEANING YOUR ROOM?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WELL, I JUST THOUGHT I'D TELL YOU THAT IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY OUTSIDE. REALLY BEAUTIFUL.
AMAZING, ACTUALLY.
WELL, I'LL LET YOU GET BACK TO YOUR CHORES.
WAAAAAAA
SOME PEOPLE ARE SURE SENSITIVE ABOUT THE WEATHER.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


So WHAT HAPPENS NOW WITH THE PRINCE FINDING OUT THAT WEARING TIGHT PANTS DOESN'T NECESSARILY MAKE HIS LEGS LOOK SKINNY?
THE PRINCE GOES THROUGH PERSONAL TURMOIL. FEELING BETRAYED, HE EVENTUALLY RETREATS FROM SOCIETY.
ALL THAT FOR A FASHION FAUX PAS?!!
SOMETIMES, IT TAKES VERY LITTLE TO SNAP.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a charming way with words. You can be powerfully persuasive. You keep abreast of things; you're aware of what is going on in terms of current events. You're curious about history in the making. You have a great sense of humor. People love your stories. The year ahead is fun, social and wonderful for relationships. **Birthdate of:** David Cassidy, former teen idol; Tom Clancy, author; David Letterman, TV host.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Because tomorrow is the Full Moon, you might experience increased tension when dealing with partners and close friends. Don't worry about this. It will be gone by tomorrow.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You'll need extra patience to deal with co-workers today (and perhaps events related to your job). This is just Full Moon tension. It's gone in 36 hours.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Children, romance, creative projects and show business are sources of stress right now. Do as little as possible. This tension passes in a day or two.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Tomorrow's Full Moon is at odds with your sign. This could create tension between you and authority figures, like parents, bosses and VIPs. Be polite. Watch which way the wind blows.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Avoid arguments about political and religious subjects. Let others believe what they want to believe—just take care of your own beliefs. (That's really all you can ever do, anyway.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Talk to someone about how to divide something today. You will know what to do. People are worried about getting their fair share of things.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): The Full Moon is in your sign tomorrow. You might feel more emotional about things. Not to worry. This passes in about 36 hours, maybe less.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Do not try to please everyone at work now. Just please yourself. Unspoken doubts could make you second-guess yourself today. Don't do this.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You may find yourself at odds with friends and groups today. Don't push things! Opposition arises easily in a Full Moon period, which lasts at least 24 hours. (Wait a few days.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Parents, bosses and authority figures are dicey and difficult today. (Or so it seems.) Tomorrow's Full Moon exaggerates this. Don't be pushy. Wait until Friday to make your move.

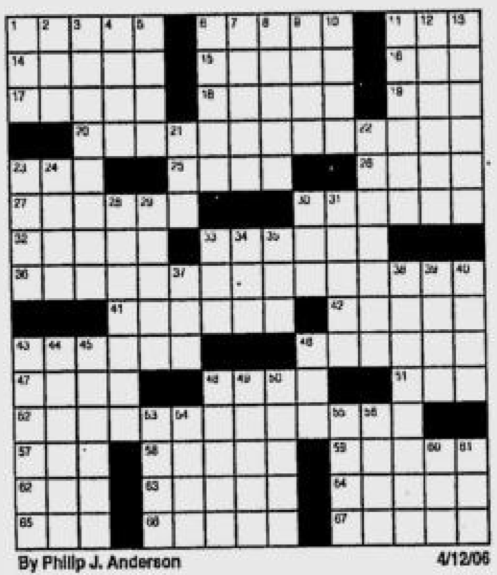
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Travel plans could meet with opposition today; ditto for work related to publishing and the media. Don't throw in the towel. Wait a day to see what develops.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today and tomorrow are not good days to divide something or decide how to spend an allotted amount of money. People are at odds with each other. And tempers easily flare! Wait till Friday.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Propels skyward
6 Camera setting
11 Six-pt. plays
14 Delete
15 La Scala offering
16 Paris pal
17 Lesson from Aesop
18 Entices
19 Grave letters
20 Pitt/Jolie movie
23 Make lace
25 On the ocean
26 '60s hairdo
27 Discharges
30 Canadian island
32 Muse of poetry
33 Tropical rodent
36 Business ventures for couples
41 Aquarium fish
42 In agreement
43 British P.M. and family
46 Fills with thin mortar
47 Eliel Saarinen's son
48 Sitarist Shankar
51 __ Gatos, CA
52 Main/Kilbride movie
57 Cop call
58 Comic Williams
59 Eccentric
62 Part of AT&T
63 Samuel of the Supreme Court
64 John of pop music
65 Exist
66 Lady's address
67 Frozen rain

DOWN
1 NASA vehicle
2 Barcelona gold
3 Group of major league hopefuls
4 Bygone Russian ruler
5 Actress Ward
6 Pleats
7 Foam
8 __ cotta
9 Raw minerals
10 Overtake
11 Import tax
12 Composer Shostakovich
13 Transfer tube
21 Certain mil. base
22 Member of Corleone's family
23 Abound
24 Farming prefix
28 Stopping place
29 Salon lotion
30 Public vehicle
31 Perfume ingredient
33 IRS mo.
34 Tibetan gazelle
35 Harvest goddess
37 Sot's shakes
38 Wheel of fortune?
39 Within: pref.
40 Hr. with a shrink
43 Synagogue platforms
44 Ballerina or gazelle, e.g.
45 Fit for cultivation
46 Beat it!
48 Overzealous
49 Japanese dog
50 Poisonous secretion
53 Whiskey shot
54 Negri of old films
55 Some digits
56 Quiet period
60 Lobster eggs
61 Tolkien's tree



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

4/12/06

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

H	A	R	D	■	G	A	L	S	■	A	P	H	I	D
O	D	E	R	■	O	L	I	O	■	S	L	O	P	E
R	E	D	O	■	L	E	A	F	■	S	A	L	O	N
U	P	Y	O	N	D	E	R	A	W	A	Y	S	■	■
S	T	E	L	A	E	■	■	■	H	I	A	T	U	S
■	■	■	■	S	N	O	R	K	E	L	■	E	N	E
O	C	T	E	T	■	D	E	A	L	■	A	I	D	E
F	O	R	T	Y	F	O	U	R	M	A	G	N	U	M
F	R	E	E	■	R	U	S	S	■	L	O	S	E	S
E	S	A	■	B	I	R	E	T	T	A	■	■	■	■
D	E	T	A	I	L	■	■	■	E	M	B	A	R	K
■	■	A	P	P	L	E	P	I	E	O	R	D	E	R
S	A	B	R	E	■	B	E	N	T	■	I	O	T	A
O	I	L	E	D	■	B	A	T	H	■	A	R	I	A
D	R	E	S	S	■	S	L	O	E	■	R	E	E	L

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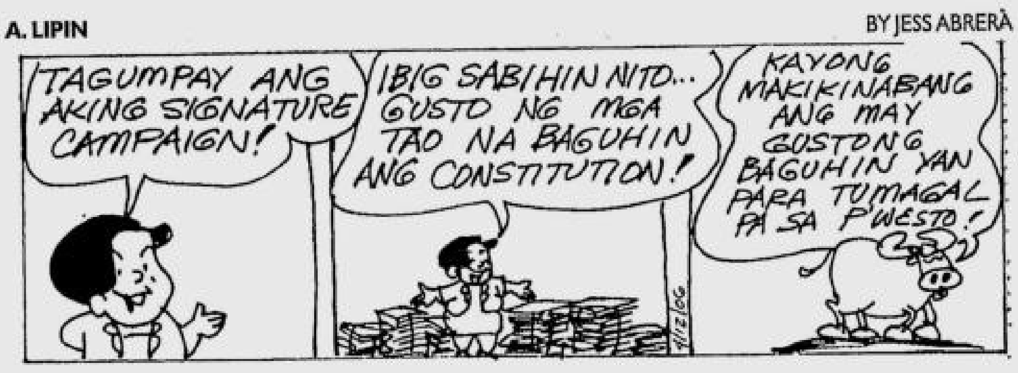
4/12/06

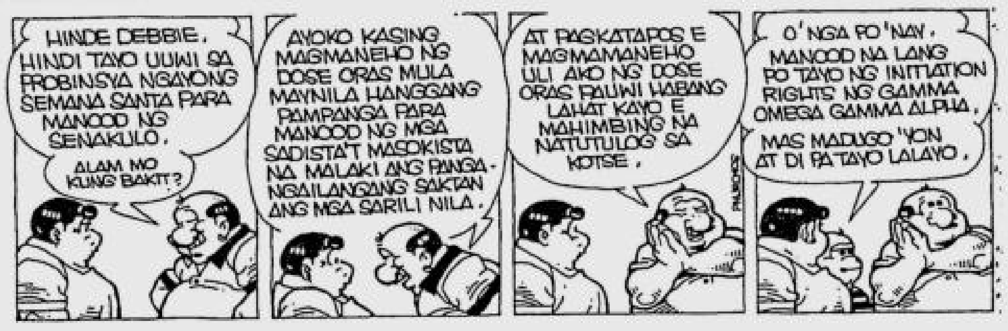
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TAGUMPAY ANG AKING SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN!
IBIG SABIHIN NITO... GUSTO NG MGA TAO NA BAGUHIN ANG CONSTITUTION!
KAYONG MAKIKINABANG ANG MAY GUSTONG BAGUHIN YAN PARA TUMAGAL PA SA P'WESTO!
4/12/06

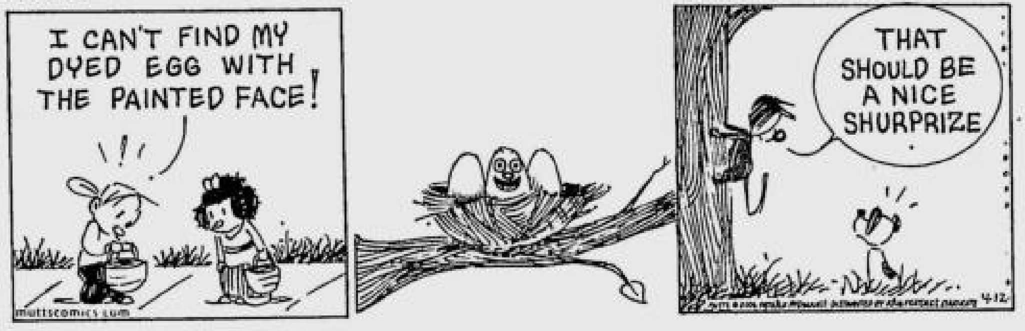
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDE DEBBIE. HINDI TAYO UUWI SA PROBINSYA NGAYONG SEMANA SANTA PARA MANOOD NG SENAKULO.
ALAM MO KUNG BAKIT?
AYOKO KASING MAGMANEHO NG DOSE ORAS MULA MAYNILA HANGGANG PAMPANGA PARA MANOOD NG MGA SADISTA'T MASOKISTA NA MALAKI ANG PANGANGAILANGANG SAKTAN ANG MGA SARILI NILA.
AT PAGKATAPOS E MAGMAMANEHO ULI AKO NG DOSE ORAS PAUWI HABANG LAHAT KAYO E MAHIMBING NA NATUTULOG SA KOTSE.
O'NGA PO 'NAY. MANOOD NA LANG PO TAYO NG INITIATION RIGHTS NG GAMMA OMEGA GAMMA ALPHA.
MAS MADUGO 'YON AT DI PA TAYO LALAYO.

MUTTS

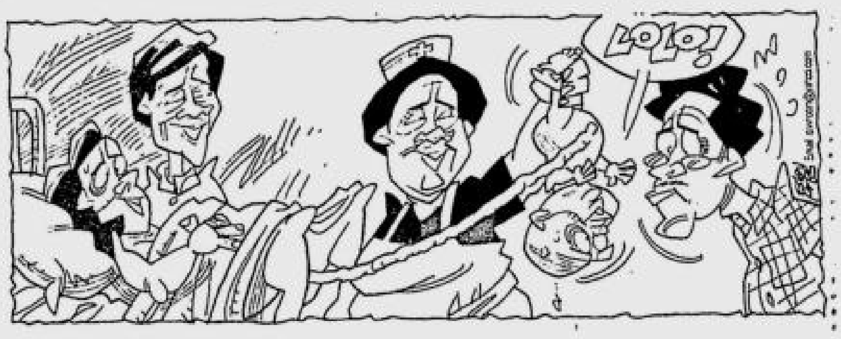
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I CAN'T FIND MY DYED EGG WITH THE PAINTED FACE!
THAT SHOULD BE A NICE SHURPRIZE
muttscomics.com
4-12

DIVINE COMEDY

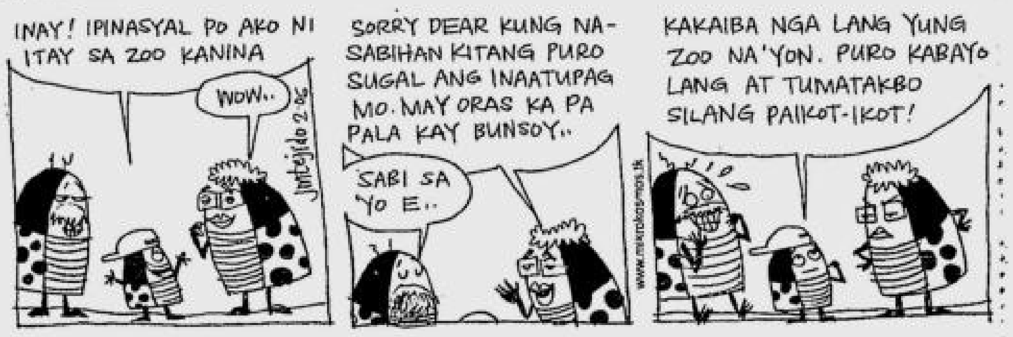
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ALAM MONG TUMATANDA KA NA KUNG
....
ANG ANAK MO AY NANGANAK NA RIN



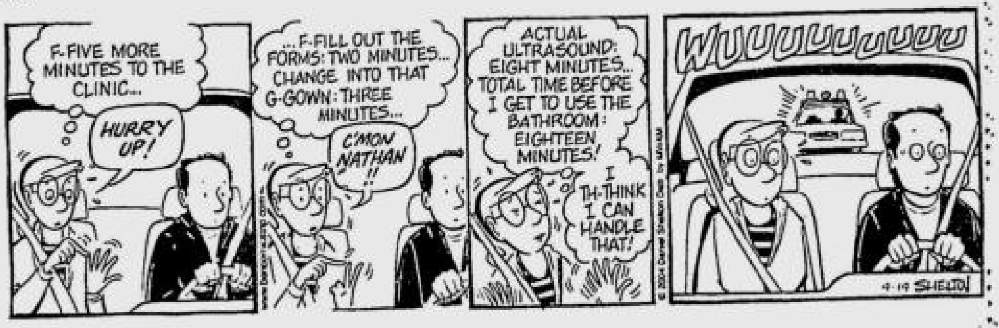
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY! IPINASYAL PO AKO NI ITAY SA ZOO KANINA
WOW..
SORRY DEAR KUNG NASABIHAN KITANG PURO SUGAL ANG INAATUPAG MO. MAY ORAS KA PA PALA KAY BUNSOY..
SABI SA YO E..
KAKAIBA NGA LANG YUNG ZOO NA'YON. PURO KABAYO LANG AT TUMATAKBO SILANG PAIKOT-IKOT!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

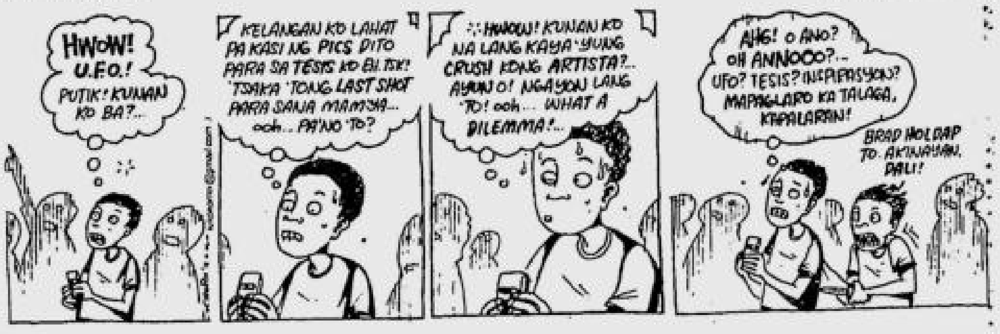
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


F-FIVE MORE MINUTES TO THE CLINIC...
HURRY UP!
...F-FILL OUT THE FORMS: TWO MINUTES... CHANGE INTO THAT G-GOWN: THREE MINUTES...
C'MON NATHAN!!
ACTUAL ULTRASOUND: EIGHT MINUTES... TOTAL TIME BEFORE I GET TO USE THE BATHROOM: EIGHTEEN MINUTES!
I TH-THINK I CAN HANDLE THAT!
WUUUUUuuuu
4-19 SHELTON

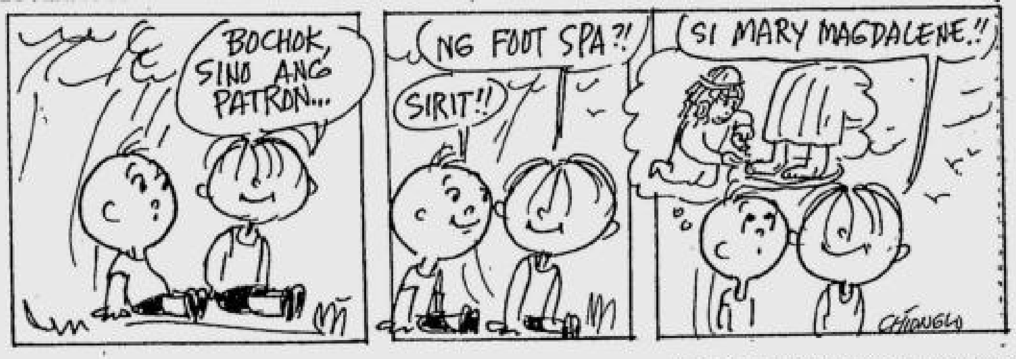
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOW! U.F.O.! PUTIK! KUNAN KO BA?..
KELANGAN KO LAHAT PA KASI NG PICS DITO PARA SA TESIS KO EH. TSK! 'TSAKA 'TONG LAST SHOT PARA SANA MAMYA... ooh... PA'NO 'TO?
HWOW! KUNAN KO NA LANG KAYA 'YUNG CRUSH KONG ARTISTA?.. AYUN O! NGAYON LANG 'TO! ooh... WHAT A DILEMMA!..
AHG! O ANO? OH ANNOOO?.. UFO? TESIS? INSPIRASYON? MAPAGLARO KA TALAGA, KAPALARAN!
BRAD HOLDAP TO. AKINA YAN. DALI!

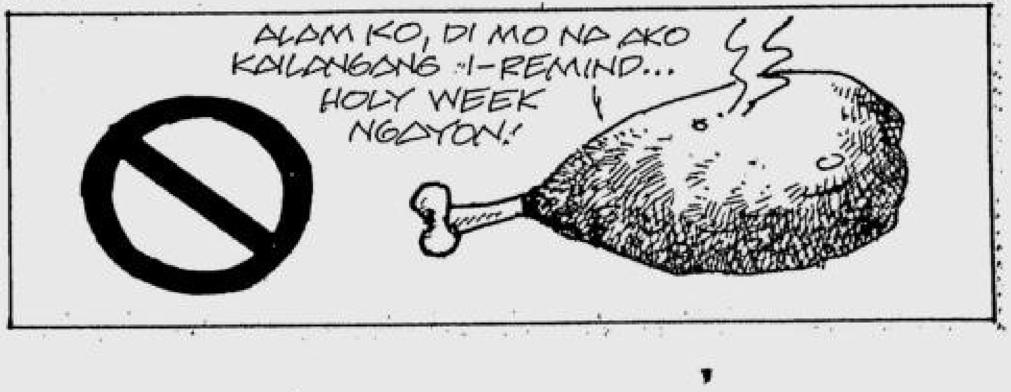
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BOCHOK, SINO ANG PATRON...
NG FOOT SPA?!
SIRIT!!
SI MARY MAGDALENE.!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ALAM KO, DI MO NA AKO KAILANGANG I-REMIND... HOLY WEEK NGAYON!

Has Sandara lost her grip?

SANDARA Park

By Nini Valera

SANDARA PARK has admitted that she lost her grip on her fans when she left for Korea exactly one year ago this month for singing and dancing classes.

"When I returned, things had changed," she told INQUIRER Entertainment in nearly flawless Filipino during the press conference for her latest movie, "D Lucky Ones," with real-life boyfriend Joseph Bitangcol. "'ASAP,' fans used to carry posters proclaiming their support for me. Now, I'm happy to see just one."

She vowed to do everything to regain lost ground. "I am now using [even] my body to get back there," she said, half in jest. "If you want to see me in a bikini... watch the movie."

Peculiar

As a contestant in ABS-CBN's "Star Circle Quest" on ABS-CBN in 2004, Sandara had inched her way to popularity with her peculiar behavior, quaint accent and straightforward chatter. She made no effort to conceal her desire to become a star.

Teamed up with Hero Angeles, who had won the search, Sandara might have been the network's new star in the tradition of Vilma Santos or Nora Aunor. But the love team soured; she fell in love with Joseph. And then she left at the height of her popularity.

Where she used to endorse a slew of product lines—from writing instruments to a skin care line—now, she lamented, "I have only one endorsement left."

Even so, her new movie's director, Wen Deramas, predicted that Sandara would go far. "She's good in both comedy and drama," said Deramas, "and that's rare."

And she never complains, Deramas said. "She's a hard worker."

Repackaged

Joey Javier Reyes, agrees. In an earlier interview, Reyes, who directed Sandara in Hero's starrer, "Can This Be Love," said she would do anything the script asked for.

"She would fall into a ditch, jump off a cliff, things like that," said Reyes. "She's determined to succeed."

Indeed, success the second time around maybe within Sandara's grasp. She has repackaged her Star Records CD to include the song, "Ang Ganda Ko." She has kept her cool, despite the difficult comeback. And she has retained her trademark candor.

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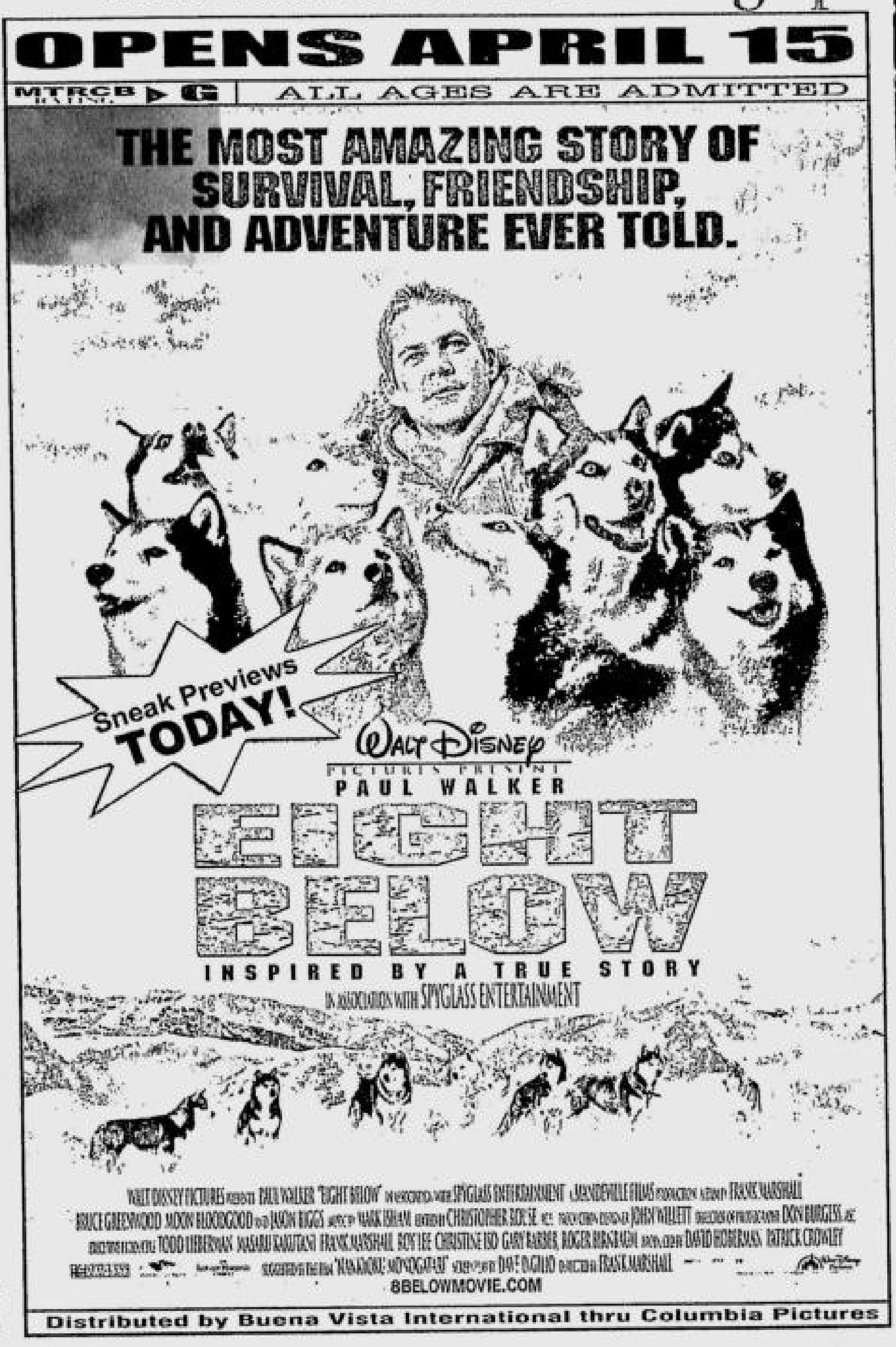
A WAR FOUGHT WITHOUT RULES.
CURTIS MORGAN ZAN CALABRETTA JORDAN BROWN EDDIE DELLA SIEPE
BASED ON REAL EVENTS.
AMERICAN SOLDIERS
DATELINE: IRAQ
THE FIRST HOLLYWOOD WAR FILM SHOT IN IRAQ



OPENS APRIL 15
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INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT
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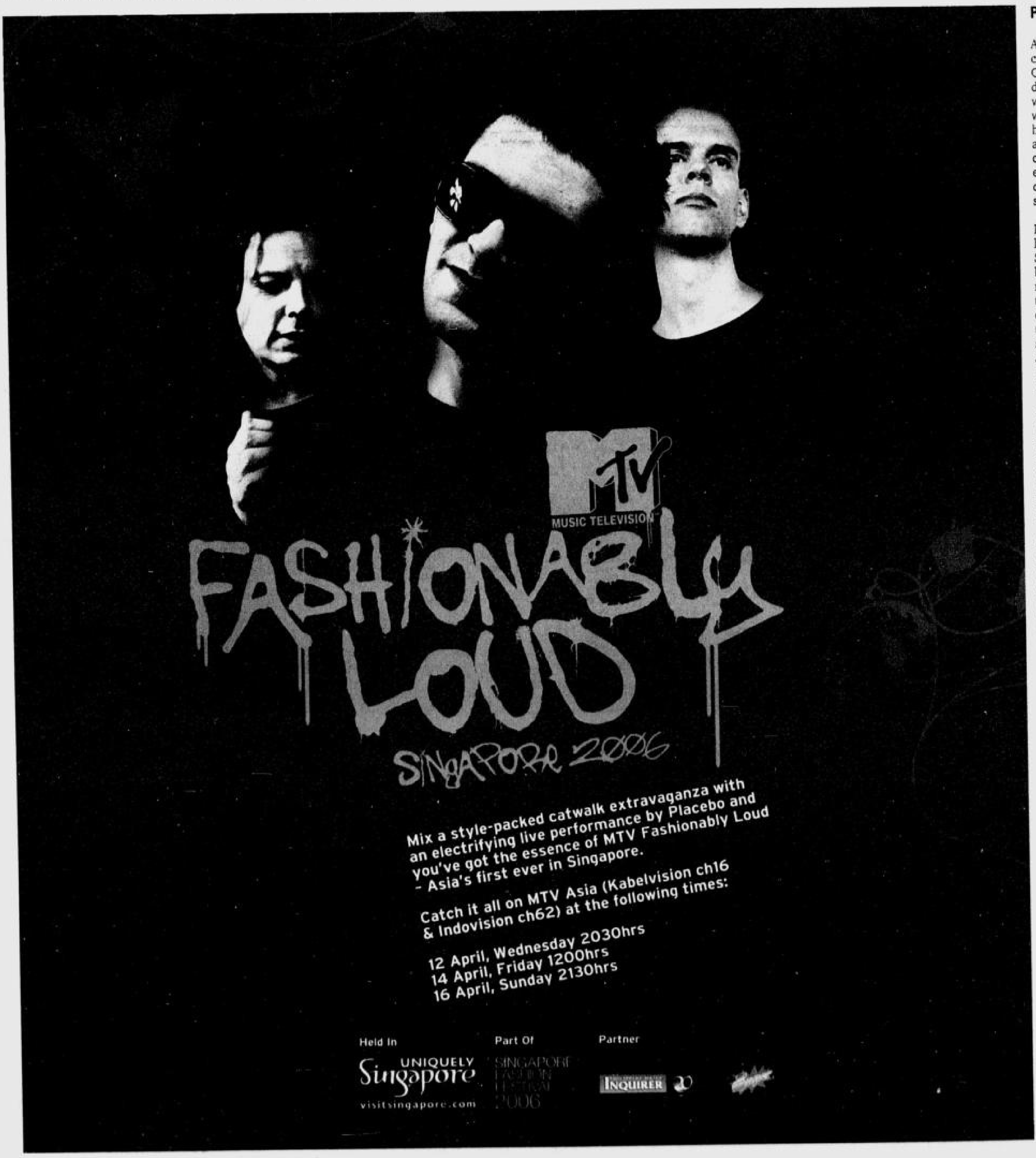

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2006

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PC BUYER'S GUIDE
The No.1 Computer Magazine in the Philippines

February exports rebound to $3.3B

2-month shipments up 4.2% at $6.56B

By Michelle V. Remo

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS GREW 9.8 percent in February from a year earlier to $3.3 billion as electronics shipments picked up, the National Statistics Office announced yesterday.

This was a turnaround from the 0.9-percent year-on-year contraction in January and the 0.2-percent decline in February 2005.

The February shipments lifted exports during the first two months of the year to $6.56 billion, up 4.2 percent from last year.

Electronics exports, which accounted for 65.9 percent of total shipments in February, rose 10.3 percent to $2.17 billion, the NSO said. In January, electronics shipments were down 2.2 percent from a year ago.

Garments were the second top revenue earner in February with a combined share for apparel and clothing accessories of 5.7 percent worth $188.71 million, while exports of ignition and other wiring sets ranked third with $60.69 million, although this amount was down 5.3 percent year-on-year.

The top export market for the month was the United States, which bought $623.34 million or 18.9 percent of the total, an increase of 19.9 percent from the February 2005 figure.

Export receipts from Japan, the No. 2 mar-

2-MONTH/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

- La Salle sex scandal /B3
- UN urges freer flow of workers /B6

Vehicle sales surged 38% in March

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MOTOR VEHICLE SALES GROWTH WAS ALmost flat in the first quarter, but March figures surged 38.5 percent due to a Supreme Court ruling that bans the entry of imported used vehicles from the Subic free port, according to an industry group.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi)and the Truck Manufacturers Association (TMA) said in a joint report there were 22,065 units sold between January and March, or 0.4 percent higher than the 21,972 units sold in the same period last year.

In March, local assemblers sold a total of 8,319 units compared with 6,007 in the same month of 2005.

Campi and TMA said the increase was due to stable supply, promotions, and fleet sales delivery.

However, the groups said the improvement "(might) also be the start of a positive effect on industry sales given the Supreme Court ruling against imported used vehicles as buyers, in turn, become more cognizant of the medium-term effects on those vehicles."

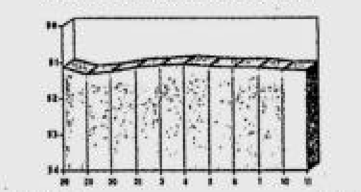
They added that industry sales were seen to gain momentum once the firms' problem on the 70-percent value-added cap was remedied. The companies want full recovery of their input VAT credits from their business operations.

"Overall sales are also expected to increase in the coming months should stable political and economic conditions coupled with a

VEHICLE/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱51.21 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 11, 2006

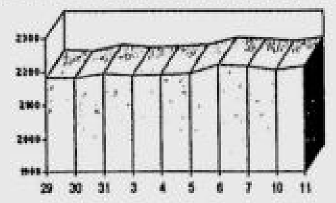
¥118.44 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 11, 2006

GOLD: $601.30-601.80

per ounce Hong Kong, April 11, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Bargain-hunting lifts stocks

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.43 PERcent higher yesterday amid some bargain-hunting following a mixed performance by Wall Street overnight and another spike in oil prices, dealers said.

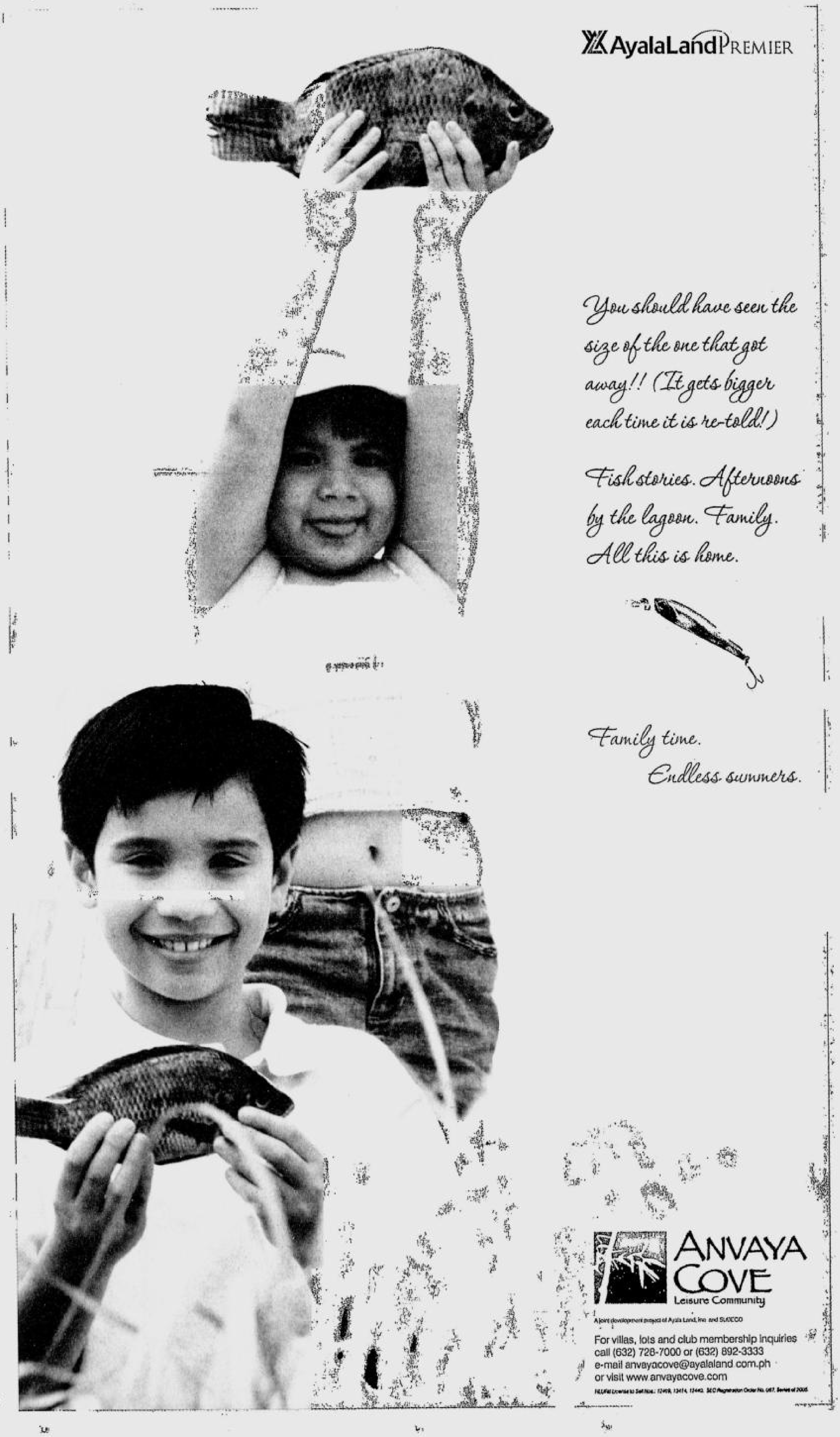
The gains were also made with gold futures closing above $600 an ounce for the first time since December 1980 on the New York Mercantile Exchange overnight, rising in tandem with crude prices on talk of a possible US attack on Iranian nuclear facilities.

The composite index rose 9.44 points to 2,217.38 at its day-high of 2,217.38. It hit a low of 2,202.08.

Gainers outnumbered losers 63 to 26, and 48 stocks were unchanged.

Volume reached 2.7 billion shares worth P1.15 billion with most of the attention going to mining stocks.

"Interest on mining plays is back now that gold prices globally are rising again," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline. AFP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You should have seen the size of the one that got away!! (It gets bigger each time it is re-told!)
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Endless summers.
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SEC opposing TPG proposal

Pre-need plan-to-equity swap seen unfair to clients

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION is opposing the plan of pre-need firm TPG Corp. to suspend payments of its obligations to holders of open-ended education plans.

This was contained in the comment filed by the Office of the Solicitor General, the SEC's counsel, with the Makati Regional Trial Court last April 6.

The SEC proposed the liquidation of TPG if there was no viable option to address the firm's financial woes.

The SEC, citing the contracts between the company and its plan holders, said TPG should continue to honor its obligations.

"These plans cannot be unilaterally amended without the consent of the plan holders. The proposed rehabilitation, if approved will certainly violate the concensual nature of contracts . As such , it cannot be enforced on the parties who do not consent to it," the SEC said.

The SEC said that TPG's proposed step-up program, or the crux of its rehabilitation scheme, was not submitted for regulatory approval despite its offering to the public.

This program calls for the conversion of pre-need plans into shares in TPG, which the SEC found disadvantageous to the plan holders.

"The latter have the right to recover their investments but are not under any obligation to have their investments converted into shares of stock by force and against their will... besides, who would want to invest in an ailing company," the SEC said.

TPG has outstanding and lapsed open-ended plans worth P2 billion out of the total issued plans of P6.5 billion as of December 2004.

Open-ended education plans offered to cover tuition fees of the beneficiary regardless of the amount. The SEC banned the sale of these types of plans in 2002 after tuition fee increases were deregulated.

The SEC claimed that based on TPG's financial statement as of the fourth quarter ending December 2005, TPG's liabilities exceeded its liquid assets.

Since 1999, TPG has also failed to comply with SEC's trust fund deposit requirements.

In 2004, TPG availed itself of a five-year SEC leeway program hoping that in time, all its trust fund deficiencies would be addressed.

The SEC, however, said that on the first year of the program, TPG incurred deficiencies in its monthly payments. It had stopped paying them in 2005.

Further, the SEC also found that TPG had issued more education plans than what was approved and had continued granting cash advances to its affiliates despite its trust fund shortfall.

TPG argued in letters to the SEC that its alleged over-issuance of plans was cleared by the commission after TPG paid penalties. It also said its trust fund deposits for education has excess contributions of P2 billion. It further said that the delays in its deposits for its pension trust fund was due to long standing accounts from LBC Express Inc.

Republic of the Philippines
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
First Judicial Region
Branch 59
Baguio City
(ADDITIONAL FAMILY COURT OF BAGUIO)

LETICIA F. CORPUZ,
Petitioner
—versus—
HOSSAM ELDIN MOHAMED ALI,
Respondent

Civil Case No. 619-FC
for
Declaration of Nullity of
Marriage

x-----x

SUMMONS
(By Publication)

WHEREAS, the herein petitioner filed a verified petition on October 27, 2005, herein quoted as follows:

"COMES NOW the PETITIONER represented by the LAW FIRM and unto the Honorable Court most respectfully states:

The PARTIES

1. PETITIONER LETICIA F. CORPUZ is of legal age, Filipino citizen, and a resident of No. 285, Mercury Alley, Upper Quezon Hill, Baguio City where she may be served with summons and other processes of this Honorable Court.

2. RESPONDENT HOSSAM ELDIN MOHAMED ALI is of legal age and an Egyptian citizen. His present whereabouts is unknown, but it is believed that if he were still alive today he could be in his home country at Cairo, Egypt. Thus, necessitating the need of EXTRA TERRITORIAL SERVICE by PUBLICATION of the summons and other processes of the Honorable Court.

The FACTS

3. Sometime in the year 1991, the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT met at Bisha, Saudi Arabia. The PETITIONER was an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) employed as a nurse while the RESPONDENT was a doctor at New Al-amal Dispensary at Bisha, Saudi Arabia.

4. A simple friendship developed into a serious relationship. Eventually, the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT became lovers. The sweet romance lasted for almost six (6) months.

5. Thereafter, the PETITIONER finished her two (2) years working contract and decided to return to (sic) in the Philippines. While in the Philippines, the PETITIONER learned from a friend that the RESPONDENT left Saudi Arabia and went back to his native country of Egypt.

6. Subsequently, the PETITIONER was able to communicate with the RESPONDENT while he was in Egypt. After a few months, the RESPONDENT informed the PETITIONER that he returned to Al Baha, Saudi Arabia.

7. The passion between the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT returned and was met with a new vigor. The RESPONDENT proposed to the PETITIONER that as soon as he was able to settle at Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia he wanted the latter to follow as his wife.

8. In the course of the long distance relationship between the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT, the former who was still in the Philippines met a certain Reverend John Baterina. The latter secured a MARRIAGE LICENSE dated April 14, 1994 for the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT at Quezon City. Likewise, he processed the marriage contract of the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT. The MARRIAGE CONTRACT is hereto attached as Annex "A";

9. A cursory examination of the MARRIAGE CONTRACT will show that it is complete in all pertinent details except for the official registry number. It is stated thereon that Reverend JOHN BATERINA solemnized the marriage of the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT on May 22, 1994 at Baguio City. The MARRIAGE CONTRACT bears the signature of the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT. Similarly, two (2) witnesses in the marriage namely RENATO BERGONIA and ESTRELITA ROJAS attested to the celebration of the marriage by likewise signing the MARRIAGE CONTRACT.

10. However, no actual MARRIAGE CEREMONY between the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT took place. RESPONDENT did not come to the Philippines for the celebration of the marriage. PETITIONER sent by mail a copy of the MARRIAGE CONTRACT from the Philippines to the RESPONDENT who was in Egypt. The RESPONDENT signed the MARRIAGE CONTRACT in Egypt.

11. The PETITIONER was made to believe that it did not matter if the RESPONDENT was not present as long as his signature appears in the MARRIAGE CONTRACT. It was only later that PETITIONER was advised by a lawyer that the marriage was null and void for lack of essential and formal requisites of marriage.

12. It is worth stating that the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT did not even personally apply for the MARRIAGE LICENSE. In this respect, it was Reverend JOHN BATERINA who facilitated the application and release of the MARRIAGE LICENSE before the LOCAL CIVIL REGISTRAR of Quezon City;

13. Nonetheless, unaware that the marriage was void ab initio the PETITIONER used the MARRIAGE CONTRACT in her application for a VISA in Saudi Arabia. The VISA of the PETITIONER allowing her to stay in Saudi (sic) Arabia was approved. The PETITIONER flew to Saudi Arabia in December 1994. She was welcomed by the RESPONDENT and they lived together treated as her lawful spouse. The PETITIONER and RESPONDENT lived together as husband and wife.

14. Out of the amorous relationship of the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT they begot one child who was christened JOSHUA HOSSAM MOHAMED ALI. The child was born on June 15, 1996 at Baguio City. A copy of the CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH of JOSHUA HOSSAM MOHAMED ALI is herein attached as Annex "B".

15. Sadly, before the birth of JOSHUA HOSSAM MOHAMED ALI the union of the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT suffered from serious setbacks. Among the problems were as follows: (1) There was a clash of culture between the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT brought about by differences in religion, (2) The PETITIONER was often neglected and treated as an object by the RESPONDENT, (3) The PETITIONER and RESPONDENT seldom see each other as they were earning a living in different places away from each other, and (4) The RESPONDENT resigned from his work and returned to Egypt in September 1995 and just left PETITIONER behind in Saudi Arabia;

16. These predicaments aggravated by the insensitivity and uncaring attitude of the RESPONDENT prevailed the PETITIONER to deliver her first born in the Philippines;

17. After the birth of JOSHUA HOSSAM MOHAMED ALI in the Philippines, the PETITIONER never heard any word from the RESPONDENT. The PETITIONER tried to reach him but all her efforts were in vain. To date, she does not know his whereabouts much less if he were still alive.

18. In addition, the RESPONDENT showed no interest to the child JOSHUA HOSSAM MOHAMED ALI. Said child was raised and supported by no less than the PETITIONER and her relatives;

19. The PETITIONER was able to solely give the child JOSHUA HOSSAM MOHAMED ALI a decent living by finding overseas employment after her separation from the RESPONDENT.

The FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

20. To reiterate, the RESPONDENT was NOT PRESENT when the marriage was solemnized. There was no actual solemnization of marriage between the PETITIONER and RESPONDENT. It cannot be said that the RESPONDENT freely gave his CONSENT to the marriage in the presence of the solemnizing officer. As already stated, the RESPONDENT merely signed the MARRIAGE CONTRACT in Egypt.

21. The PETITIONER therefore prays for the DECLARATION OF NULLITY of her marriage with the RESPONDENT based on the applicable provisions of EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 209 of the FAMILY CODE of the PHILIPPINES hereunder quoted:

xxx

Article 2. No marriage shall be valid, unless these essential requisites are present:

(1) Legal capacity of the contracting parties who must be male and female; and

(2) Consent freely given in the presence of the solemnizing officer.

Article 3. The formal requisites of marriage are:

(1) Authority of the solemnizing authority;

(2) A valid marriage license except in the cases provided (sic) for in Chapter 2 of this title;

(3) A marriage ceremony which takes place with the appearance of the contracting parties before the solemnizing officer and their personal declaration that they take each other as husband and wife in the presence of not less than two witnesses of legal age (53a, 55a)

Article 4. The absence of any of the essential or formal requisites shall render the marriage void ab initio, except as stated in Article 35 (2).

A defect in any of the essential requisites shall render the marriage voidable as provided in Article 45.

An irregularity in the formal requisites shall not affect the validity of the marriage but the party or parties responsible for the irregularity shall be civilly, criminally, and administratively liable. (n)

xxx

The SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

22. Likewise, the PETITIONER prays for the DECLARATION OF NULLITY of her marriage with the RESPONDENT based on Article 36 of EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 209 of the FAMILY CODE of the PHILIPPINES.

23. Evidently, the RESPONDENT treated the PETITIONER as a mere object that should follow him in blind obedience. Moreover, the RESPONDENT is a highly immature individual who does not take marital life seriously and its consequences. This can be summed with his continued failure to contact the PETITIONER and provide love, care, and support to her and to their child JOSHUA HOSSAM MOHAMED ALI;

24. The PSYCHOLOGICAL INCAPACITY of the RESPONDENT was existing at the time of his union with the PETITIONER although it was not perceivable at the time but it became manifest after and during the cohabitation.

25. The root cause of the foregoing PSYCHOLOGICAL INCAPACITY can be clinically and medically identified and proven by experts.

26. The PSYCHOLOGICAL INCAPACITY of RESPONDENT is grave, medically and clinically permanent and incurable to the point the RESPONDENT was and continue to be disabled from performing and assuming essential obligations of marriage.

The THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

27. Lastly, the RESPONDENT can be considered as an ABSENT SPOUSE the former has not been heard of by the PETITIONER for more than FOUR (4) YEARS now, it being unknown whether or not he (sic) still alive.

28. For all legal intents and purposes THE rules on presumptive death AS PROVIDED FOR BY Article 41 of EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 209 of the FAMILY CODE of the PHILIPPINES can be applied to the RESPONDENT in order for the PETITIONER to remarry.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, it is most respectfully prayed of the Honorable court that the marriage between PETITIONER and RESPONDENT be declared NULL and VOID pursuant to the applicable laws particularly the applicable provisions of EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 209 or the FAMILY CODE of the PHILIPPINES.

Such other reliefs just and equitable under the premises are likewise prayed for.

Baguio City, Philippines, October 26, 2005

ECCA & PARTNERS LAW FIRM
(Counsel for the PETITIONER)
Suite 208 Manahan Baguio City
by
(Sgd.) ABELARDO C. ESTRADA
IBP Lifetime No. 04570
PTR No. 130540, 12-20-05
Roll No. 31155, 3-30-80
and
(Sgd.) JOSE ADRIAN M. BONIFACIO
IBP No. 625063, 01/10/05 BC
PTR No. 1421110, 05/31/04, BC
Roll No. 49651, 05/06/04, Manila

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
BAGUIO CITY) s.s.
x-----x

VERIFICATION/CERTIFICATION

I, LETICIA F. CORPUZ, of legal age, Filipino citizen and a resident of No. 285, Mercury Alley, Upper Quezon Hill, Baguio City after having been sworn to in accordance with law depose and say:

1. I am the PETITIONER in the above entitled case;

2. I have caused the preparation and filing of the foregoing PETITION;

3. All allegations therein are true and correct to the best of my own personal knowledge and based on authentic records.

4. I hereby certify that no other action involving the same issues as the above-entitled case has been commenced with the Supreme Court, court of (sic) Appeals or any other tribunal or agency, and to the best of my knowledge no such action or claim is pending therein. Should I learn that a similar action (sic) or proceeding is filed or pending before the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals or any tribunal or agency, I will undertake to report that fact within five (5) days therefrom to the court or agency where the original pleading and sworn certification contemplated herein above filed.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 21st day of October 2005 in the City of Baguio, Philippines.

(Sgd.) LETICIA F. CORPUZ
Affiant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN, to before me this 24th (sic) day of October 2005, by AFFIANT who has presented to me an integrally complete document or instrument together with a complete evidence of his identity.

(Sgd.) ABELARDO C. ESTRADA
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2006
PTR No. 1305016, 12/20/05
Baguio City

Doc No. 402
Page No. 93
Book No. XLI
Series of 2005."

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2006 the petitioner through counsel filed with this court, a Motion For Leave of Court to Serve Summons by Publication, it appearing that respondent is an Egyptian citizen whose present whereabouts is unknown.

WHEREAS, this court in its Order dated February 14, 2006 granted the petitioner's Motion For Leave of Court to Serve Summons by Publication to Serve Summons by Publication.

NOW THEREFORE, you the respondent HOSSAM ELDIN MOHAMED ALI are hereby summoned through this medium of publication and therefore required to file with the office of the Clerk of Court, Regional Trial Court of Baguio City at Justice Hall, Baguio City your answer to the above-quoted petition within thirty (30) days from date of last publication hereof serving at the same time a copy of your answer upon the petitioner's counsel Atty. Abelardo C. Estrada with office address at Suite 208 Manahan Building, Session Road, Baguio City, and failure to do so within the period herein prescribed, the petitioner shall take judgment against you and demand from the court the remedies and reliefs prayed for in the said petition.

Let this summons be published at the expense of the petitioner in the Philippine Daily Inquirer a newspaper of national circulation once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks.

However, a copy of this summons, together with a copy of the petition and the Order dated February 14, 2006 cannot be deposited at the Baguio City Post Office postage pre-paid to the respondent Hossam Eldin Mohamed Ali by registered mail considering that said respondent has no last known address in the Philippines.

WITNESS THE HONORABLE ILUMINADA CABATO-CORTES, Presiding Judge of this Court, this 20th day of February, 2006 at Baguio City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) JESSICA D. GUANSING
Acting Branch Clerk of Court

(PDI-April 12 & 19, 2006)

San Miguel beer sales up 8%

DOMESTIC BEER SALES OF SAN MIGUEL Corp., the country's largest brewer, grew 8 percent to P7.78 billion in the first two months, boosted by more aggressive marketing campaign and brand building.

The company said in its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that operating income for January and February rose 10 percent to P1.69 billion from year-ago level.

In 2005, domestic beer revenue grew 10 percent to P40.5 billion, reflecting a price increase in February last year. Sales volume in 2005 declined 2 percent to 170 million cases because of soft consumer demand.

Despite the increase in excise taxes, operating income for domestic beer rose 13 percent last year to P8.31 billion due to effective cost management efforts.

This year, San Miguel's Philippine beer operations continued its brand-building programs. It recently signed up boxing icon Manny Pacquiao as product endorser for San Miguel Beer in a commercial with another SMB endorser, television host Kris Aquino.

Other major volume-generating brand activities for its domestic beer brand were San Mig Light's sponsorship of the Philippine Mountain Bike Championship Pro Tour 2006 held in February and the San Miguel Beer Poker Bar Tour that concluded its final round last January.

February exports . . .

From page B1

ket for the month, were down 11.4 percent from the year earlier to $544.53 million, or 16.5 percent of February receipts.

Other top export destinations during the month were the Netherlands, $380.6 million; China, $319.67 million; Singapore, $284.19 million; Hong Kong, $223.71 million; Malaysia, $182.83 million; Taiwan, $127.08 million; Thailand, $101.67 million, and Germany, $100.87 million.

While economic officials remained upbeat about the export sector, private economists expect growth this year to be subdued.

Dennis Arroyo, Neda director for policy and planning, earlier said global demand for electronics had bottomed last year and was headed for an upturn this year.

But the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), tasked with setting the government's economic policies and targets, had scaled down its export growth target for 2006 to 8 percent from the original 10 percent due to the adverse effects of a stronger peso on exports.

The revised projection was, however, more optimistic compared with private sector forecasts.

Stephen Huang, economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P), yesterday said exports would likely grow by only 6.8 percent this year due to the expected softening of overall demand in the United States.

Huang said the predicted slowdown in the US economy had to do with its high current account deficit, already at 7 percent of gross domestic product, which may force the Federal Reserve to implement another increase in interest rates.

An increase in interest rates discourages companies from borrowing to finance expansion and purchases. This, in turn, can affect demand for imported products such as electronics.

The economy of Japan, the Philippines' second-biggest export destination, is likewise expected to slow down this year. This would add to the downward pressure on the Philippines' export growth, according to the 2006 Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific that was launched yesterday.

Japan is likely to grow by only 2 percent this year, a deceleration from the 2.5 percent recorded last year, the survey said.

SM
INVESTMENTS
CORPORATION

Notice of Regular Annual Stockholders' Meeting
April 27, 2006, 2:30 p.m.
Rigodon Ballroom, The Peninsula Manila Hotel
Makati City

To all Stockholders:

Please take notice that the 2006 annual stockholders' meeting of SM Investments Corporation. will be held on April 27, 2006 at 2:30 p.m. at the Rigodon Ballroom, The Peninsula Manila Hotel, Makati City. The proposed agenda of the meeting is set forth below:

AGENDA

1. Call to order.
2. Certification of notice and quorum.
3. Approval of minutes of the special meeting of stockholders held on July 15, 2005.
4. Presentation of the President's Report.
5. General ratification of the acts of the Board of Directors and the management from the date of the last annual stockholders' meeting up to the date of this meeting.
6. Election of directors for 2006 - 2007.
7. Appointment of external auditors.
8. Adjournment.

The Board of Directors has fixed the end of trading hours of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) on March 28, 2006 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice of and to vote at such meeting and any adjournment thereof.

Pasay City, March 8, 2006.

BY THE ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

[sgd.]
EMMANUEL C. PARAS
Corporate Secretary
SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 11, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35	35	35	136,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	61.5	61.5	61	61	573,100
China Banking Corp.	735	735	735	735	10
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.49	9,880,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	70	71.5	69.5	71.5	611,300
International Exch. Bank	32	32.5	32	32.5	67,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	39.5	38	39.5	325,200
Philippine National Bank	33	34	33	34	63,700
Phil. Savings Bank	38.5	39	38	39	3,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	14.5	13.75	14.5	273,200
Security Bank Corp.	47.5	47.5	46.5	47	96,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	39	39	39	39	18,800
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
First Metro Invest. Corp.	26.5	28	26.5	28	5,600
Manulife Financial Corp.	3240	3240	3240	3240	210
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	186	186	186	186	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2160	2160	2160	2160	40
Ivantage Corp.	1.06	1.14	1.06	1.12	19,778,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Gen Corp.	44.5	44.5	44	44.5	74,800
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	46	45	45.5	559,200
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14	14	14	13,200
Manila Electric Co. B	20.75	20.75	20.25	20.25	466,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	1,772,000
Petron Corp.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.3	8,653,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	230,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.94	330,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	140,000
Cen Azucar De Tarlac	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	109,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19.5	20	19.5	20	26,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35.5	35.5	35.5	35.5	343,700
Pancake House Inc.	4	4	4	4	18,000
RFM Corp.	0.76	0.77	0.76	0.76	400,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.85	2.75	2.75	1,093,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	60	59	60	215,900
San Miguel Corp. B	79	79	77.5	78.5	197,400
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	338,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	0.35	0.36	0.33	0.33	16,260,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.54	1.54	8,633,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.35	4.3	4.35	530,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3	3	3	3	5,000
		CHEMICALS			
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	10,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	2,900,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	2,000,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.48	190,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	21,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.008	0.01	0.008	0.01	14,000,000
Ayala Corp.	347.5	355	347.5	355	56,490
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.5	4,905,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	8,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.7	225,000
APC Group Inc.	0.205	0.22	0.205	0.22	10,680,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	75,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.86	0.9	0.86	0.89	310,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	220,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.99	3,050,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.65	3.5	3.6	2,920,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	703,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	5,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	669,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	340,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	1,400,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	20,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.57	0.59	0.57	0.59	110,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.14	14,710,000
SM Investments Corp.	226	226	225	225	8,690
South China Resources Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	10,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	70,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	2,750,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	11	11	10.75	11	11,005,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
Belle Corp.	1.16	1.26	1.16	1.24	23,341,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.9	1.86	1.88	2,240,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	1,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	2,340,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.64	15,350,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.4	1.34	1.4	12,995,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	2,500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	2,500,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	18,500,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	2,860,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.1	1.7	1.1	1.7	2,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.3	1,033,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.27	0.3	0.27	0.3	7,580,000
SM Development Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	331,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.7	4,310,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	670,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.5	56,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	48,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.98	1,010,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	860	895	860	895	14,300
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3	3	2.95	3	3,791,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1965	1990	1965	1990	62,780
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.2	2,050,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	7,900,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.12	171,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.025	0.023	0.024	142,200,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12	12	11	11	3,283,200
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.76	1.8	1.76	1.8	1,074,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	132,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	150,000
		EDUCATION			
IPeople Inc.	3.1	3.2	3.05	3.2	203,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.8	1.84	697,000
Paxys Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.2	439,000
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.58	1.98	1.58	1.94	10,786,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.6	1.98	1.6	1.94	7,100,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	442,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.9	7.3	6.9	7.2	4,648,000
Benguet Corp. A	9	10	9	10	939,000
Benguet Corp. B	30	32	30	32	600
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.9	2.06	1.9	2.02	1,339,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.32	0.29	0.32	115,050,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.34	46,940,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.021	0.022	0.02	0.021	360,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.031	0.03	0.031	133,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.007	344,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.35	3.7	3.35	3.7	14,256,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.4	3.75	3.4	3.7	18,436,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	28	27	28	533,900
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.39	0.35	0.39	6,590,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	3,510,000
		OIL			
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	3,270,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	376,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	300,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.53	0.56	0.53	0.56	110,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.53	0.56	0.53	0.56	160,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.85	54,000
		PREFERRED			
PLDT (10% Pref) SERIES W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,400
PLDT (10% Pref) SERIES X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
		WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.			
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	13	13	12.75	13	324,100

CURRENCIES

April 11, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.825900	1.000000	51.1320
Japan	Yen	0.006978	0.008449	0.4320
United Kingdom	Pound	1.439131	1.742500	89.0975
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106480	0.128926	6.5922
Switzerland	Franc	0.634039	0.767695	39.2538
Canada	Dollar	0.718987	0.870549	44.5129
Singapore	Dollar	0.513651	0.621929	31.8005
Australia	Dollar	0.602319	0.729288	37.2900
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.191530	2.653505	135.6790
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220211	0.266631	13.6334
Brunei	Dollar	0.512059	0.620001	31.7019
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000093	0.000112	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.021752	0.026337	1.3467
UAE	Dirham	0.224870	0.272272	13.9218
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.210800	61.9106
India	Rupee	0.018493	0.022391	1.1449
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.225164	0.272628	13.9400
New Zealand	Dollar	0.502312	0.608199	31.0984
Korea	Won	0.000866	0.001048	0.0536
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025455	0.030821	1.5759

Vehicle sales . . .

From page B1

strong peso continue," Campi and TMA said.

In the first quarter, passenger car sales dipped by 0.2 percent to 8,339 units from 8,357 units last year.

But in March, car sales went up by 32.7 percent to 2,982 units from 2,247 units a year ago.

Turnover of commercial vehicles increased by 0.8 percent to 13,726 units in the first three months from 13,615 units.

The introduction of new models helped boost March sales of CVs by 41.9 percent to 5,337 units from 3,760 units.

First-quarter sales of AUVs went down 12.3 percent to 5,581 units while those of light trucks slid by 2.2 percent to 363 units.

Sales of light commercial vehicles—consisting of pickups, vans, compact sports utility vehicles—went up 13 percent to 7,662 units while those of trucks and buses grew by 17.6 percent to 120 units.

In terms of total sales, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. kept the lead with 40.1 percent of the market. It sold 8,848 units the previous three months, up by 17.8 percent.

La Salle sex scandal

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

A DISGUSTED GRANDFATHER HAS PULLED out all four of his grandchildren from La Salle Greenhills from re-enrolling next year after the school voted to keep a taekwondo instructor who carried on adulterous relations with the grandfather's daughter-in-law.

What appalled Maximo Amurao Jr., who teaches criminal law in San Beda College of Law, was that Bro. Bernard Oca, La Salle president, even talked to Amurao's daughter-in-law, who had already confessed to her indiscretions, to prevent her from testifying against her lover.

"There was no violation of any school policy," was the curt explanation of Bro. Oca in defending La Salle's decision to keep the macho instructor.

Brother Oca also cleared another PE instructor, whose father sits in the school board, who had been entrapped in the school grounds luring the same woman into carrying on a simultaneous affair with him.

Earlier, Brother Oca prevented the outright expulsion of a taekwondo student, who had not only confessed to bullying and repeatedly assaulting another classmate but also had been accused of forging a check and stealing his victim's cell phone.

The taekwondo bully said he knew "a lot of secrets" in the taekwondo department and a certain La Salle official, according to his victim.

If his name rings a bell, it is because Brother Oca is one of the active patrons of the Black-and-White Movement seeking the removal of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for alleged cheating in the last presidential elections.

The religious leader, who is due to be replaced as president of the exclusive school in the next school year, celebrated his last days with his faculty by chartering a passenger jet and bringing the entire staff on an all-expenses-paid vacation in Bohol late last month.

SEC rebuffs Mike boys

THE Securities and Exchange Commission has stood up to the importunings of Mike Arroyo's relatives in seeking to indefinitely postpone the shareholders' meeting of Philcomsat Holdings, ordering the cash-rich listed company to hold its much-delayed annual meeting on May 4.

"We need not stress the fact that the commission's authority must always be honored and respected by the entities which it regulates, regardless of their stature in the business environment," said the SEC general counsel, Vernette Umali-Paco.

. The SEC order also prevented the Benito Araneta-Manuel Nieto-Enrique Locsin Group from conducting the April 18 "special" stockholders' meeting, which their group had hoped to hold in lieu of the annual meeting.

"This authority must not be ignored ...," Umali-Paco said in her order.

Like father, unlike son

LUCIO TAN JR., the eldest and nattily dressed son of you-know-who, has just finished the executive MBA program of Kellogg-HK University of Science and Technology, on with ATR-Kim Eng Securities president Lorenzo Roxas.

His famous father may have narrowly failed to finish his college, but the taipan ended eventually buying up a school itself, the University of the East, aside from reaping honorary doctorate degrees from universities grateful for his financial sponsorship.

Heard through the grapevine

DESPITE its initial city and housing law violations, the 36-unit townhouse project of the family of Joseph Estrada in Vermont Park subdivision along Marcos Highway has been completed and nearly sold out. All but two of the townhouses—average price tag: P7.6 million—have remained unsold.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Banks' bad loans declining

SPV law allowed sector to dispose of bad assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BAD LOANS-TO-TOTAL LOANS ratio of Philippine commercial banks hit a new eight-year low of 8.27 percent in February from 8.43 percent in January, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

This was also better by 3.52 percentage points than the 11.79 percent posted in the same month last year.

The decline in the banks' bad loans ratio in February was attributed to the 1.5 percent drop in nonperforming loans and a 0.4-percent rise in total loan from month-ago level, the BSP noted.

In nominal terms, the sector's NPLs declined to P158.68 billion while its total loan portfolio inched up to P1.92 trillion from the January levels.

Net of inter-bank loans, the total NPL ratio also eased to 10.19 percent from 10.35 percent a month ago.

The sector's NPL ratio peaked at 18.81 percent in October 2001 but started to ease last year as the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework allowed banks to clean up about P95 billion in bad assets.

The SPV Law waived some of the taxes and reduced fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets. It waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and VAT (expanded value added tax) and reduced the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent. The law expired last April but Congress passed a law extending its effectivity for two more years.

In the meantime, the ratio of restructured loans to the banks' total loan portfolio slid to 5.16 percent in February from a month ago's 5.26 percent as restructured loans fell by 1.6 percent.

Nonperforming restructured loans rose by 1.4 percent during the month.

As of end-February, the sector's total restructured loans stood at P99.33 billion, with the nonperforming portion amounting to P50.56 billion.

Similarly, the industry's nonperforming asset-to-total assets ratio slightly rose to 8.74 percent from 8.71 percent as the bad assets increased by 0.2 percent to P346.06 billion.

Banks also boosted their provisioning levels, leading to stronger NPL and NPL coverage ratios of 79.27 percent and 42.54 percent, respectively.

PNB profit up 75% to ₱627.5M

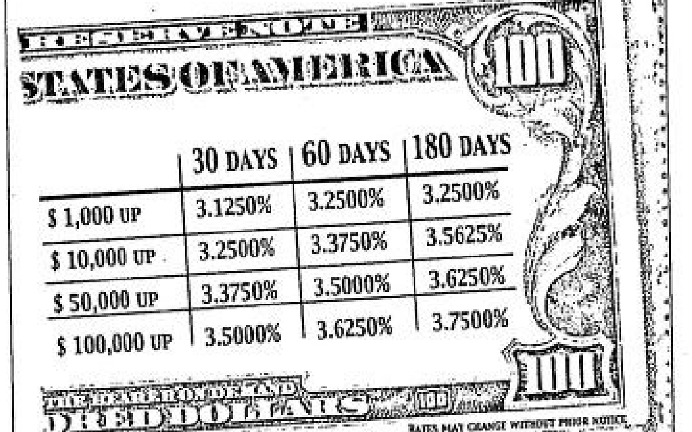
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK MARKED ITS third straight year of profitability in 2005 with a net income of P627.5 million, up 75 percent from year-ago level.

The bank said it was targeting a 25-percent increase in net income this year.

The profit increase last year was fueled by a 62-percent growth in net interest margin to P5.2 billion. Interest income went up by 21 percent to P11.1 billion while interest expense dropped by 3 percent to P5.8 billion, due to the significant growth in low-cost deposits.

Its non-performing loans slid to 23 percent from 40 percent, while capital adequacy ratio was kept at 17.2 percent, higher than the 10 percent minimum prescribed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

PNB, once the country's biggest bank, now ranks fifth with total resources of P223 billion as of end-2005. Doris C. Dumlao



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TRAVEL TIPS FROM MOTOLITE -YOUR PARTNER ON THE ROAD

Holy week is fast approaching and most of you will be traveling to your respective towns or in other destinations nationwide. With this, we wanted to ensure your safety before hitting the road. Here are some friendly reminders you may follow to assure you safe and peaceful journey back home:

1. Tires
Have your tires rotated about every 5,000 miles. Check your tire pressure once a month. Let the tires "cool down" first. Don't forget your spare, and be sure the jack is in good condition. Examine tires for tread life, uneven wearing, and cupping. Check the sidewalls for cuts and nicks.

2. Brakes
Check your brakes regularly. Take note of pulsations, grabbing, noises, or longer stopping distance. Even the most minor of brake problems should be corrected promptly.

3. Batteries
Have your batteries checked at least every 3 months. The only way to detect a weak battery is by using professional equipment (battery tester). To routinely take care of your battery, scrape away corrosion from posts and cable connections, clean all surfaces and re-tighten all connections. If battery caps are removable, check the fluid level monthly. Avoid contact with corrosive deposits and battery acid.

4. Reserve Capacity
The reserve capacity of your car's battery tells how long a battery can keep the engine going if the alternator fails. Make sure your car battery always has a reserve capacity of at least 120 minutes so you can always make it home.

5. Lights
Inspect all lights and bulbs in your car. Replace burned out bulbs and periodically clean dirt and insects from all lenses. To prevent scratching, never use a dry rag.

6. Windshield
A dirty windshield causes eye fatigue and can pose a safety hazard. Replace worn blades and get plenty of windshield-washer solvent.

7. Engine Idling
If you're waiting for a long time in the car but are not caught in traffic, it is better to turn off the engine and just start again later. Doing otherwise wastes fuel. Take to the shade instead of leaving the air conditioning on.

8. Jackrabbit Starts
To save on fuel, accelerate slowly and smoothly. Avoid jackrabbit starts and get into high gear as quickly as possible.

9. Overloading
Don't carry too much weight on your vehicle. Excess weight puts too much load on the engine and will consume more gas.

10. Seat Belt
Buckle up. A lot of accidents have been cushioned or minimized because the driver and the passengers put on their seat belts. But The Seatbelt Law also reminds us not to allow infants or children below 6 years old to sit in front. Also avoid holding a child on your lap while inside a moving vehicle or you could crush him if and when a collision happens. Never put a belt around yourself and a child on your lap. Two people with one belt around them could hurt one or both.

11. Tired and Drowsy?
When tired and feeling drowsy, don't drive or at least pull over and rest. A British survey showed that one in 10 motorists risk their lives and that of others by driving even when tiredness strikes. Motorists admitted to an accident or a near miss because of feeling tired or falling asleep on the wheel.

12. Tool Box
Never go out on the road without a toolbox in your car. What should your toolbox have? A car jack, a wheel-nut crossbar, fork spanners in 10, 13,14 and 17 millimeters, a pair of pliers, all-purpose wrench and screwdrivers.

14. Head Restraint
How good is the head restraint in your vehicle? The head restraint is not just a headrest but also a safety equipment which, if used properly, can curb whiplash and other neck injuries as well as neck trauma during accidents. A correctly positioned head restraint should be directly behind your head, at least level with your ears, not more that four inches from the rear of your head when you are sitting normally and far enough forward to contact your head first, not your neck, in a crash or sudden stop.

15. Female Drivers
Female motorists are perceived as easy prey by car thieves and bad elements. Keep an emergency kit in your car and know where the safe zones are or well-lit areas where there are people who can help you in case of an emergency, like 24-hour service stations or food stops. Lock your car doors at all times. Park at a well-lit and well-attended area. Avoid driving alone at night.

16. Traffic Rules and Regulations
Always follow and observe Traffic rules and Regulations as mandated by law. These Traffic rules normalize traffic flow and condition specifically in major routes or thoroughfares. Maintain proper distance to the next car to avoid minor accident in the event of sudden stops. The acceptable distance is 1 car apart from the next vehicle. The right speed must be observed all the time in various road situations.

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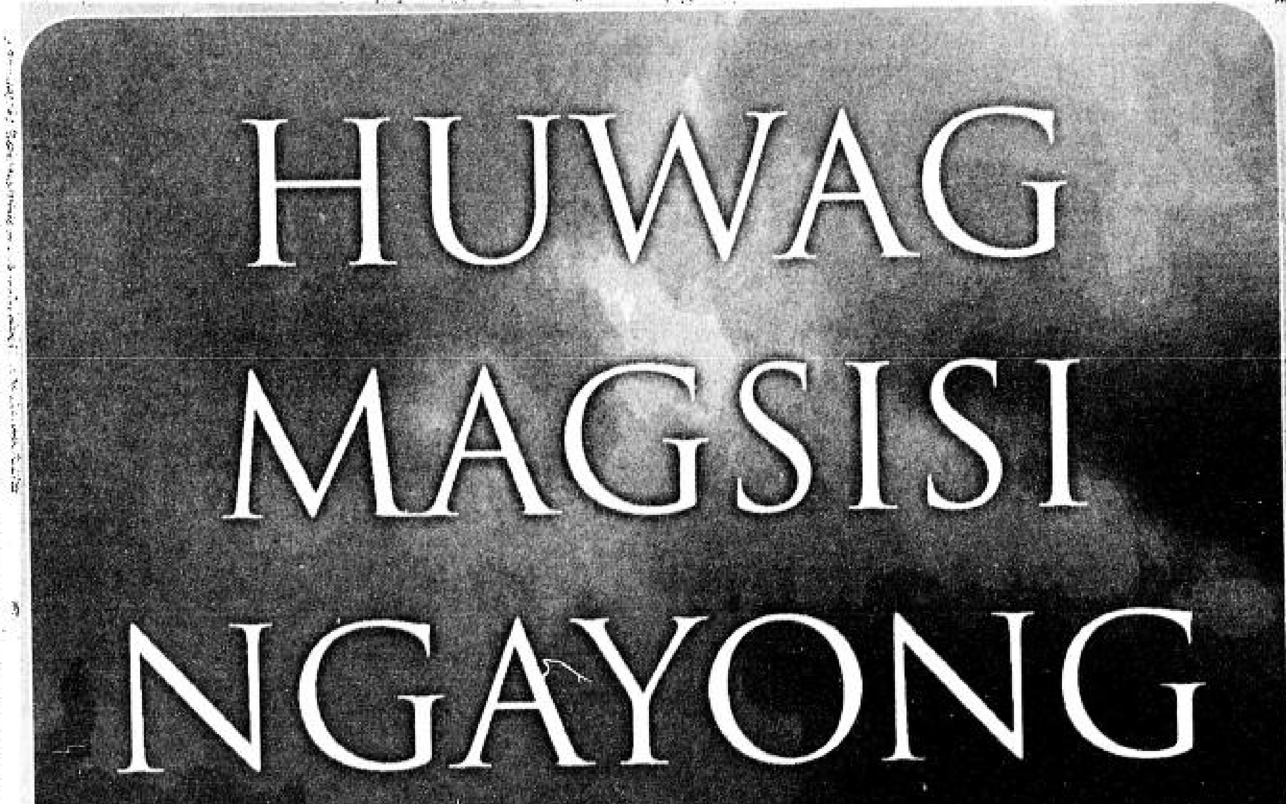

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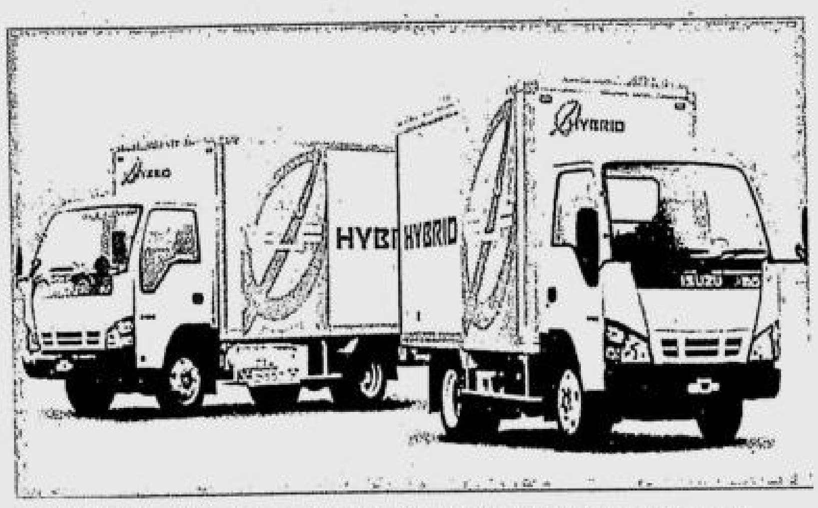
A peek at Isuzu's diesel hybrid truck

By Charles E. Buban



ISUZU ELF diesel hybrid: one of the most efficient and environment-friendly commercial vehicles in the market today

TODAY'S DIESEL ENgines not only are more rugged, powerful, durable and reliable but also use fuel much more efficiently. Thus, they should be part of the solution to improving fuel efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide emissions, according to Isuzu Philippines Corp. VP for corporate business Arthur Balmadrid.

During the 2nd Manila International Auto Show held last weekend at the World Trade Center in Pasay City, Balmadrid told the INQUIRER that companies like Isuzu are making significant headway in developing low-pollution diesel-fed vehicles to protect the environment.

Among these recent achievements is the Elf Diesel hybrid, a light truck powered by a diesel engine and assisted by an electric motor (IPC displayed one during the auto show although the company has not yet set a date when it will be available in the market).

"This latest addition to Isuzu's lineup of Elf low-pollution light-duty trucks achieves low carbon dioxide emission levels (a reduction of around 25 percent) and high fuel efficiency (an improvement of around 35 percent). It's very possible to market these trucks here since they use diesel for fuel, need no special infrastructure and can be serviced anywhere," explained Balmadrid.

Ultra-low PM emission

Based on Japan's exhaust emission regulations, the Elf diesel hybrid was found to reduce particulate matter by 85 percent while nitrogen oxides by 25 percent, and was thus, certified as an ultra-low PM emission diesel vehicle and for its low gas emissions, as an "excellent low pollution vehicle."

Both PM and NOx—two main pollutants released by diesel engines—cause a wide variety of health and environmental like asthma and other respiratory illness as well as the formation of smog and acid rain.

The Elf diesel hybrid is based on Isuzu's 4.8-liter, 127 horsepower 4HL1 diesel engine that is mated to a 25.5-kilowatt electric motor called the Smoother-E automatic shift.

How the Elf works

Here's how the vehicle works: When starting and accelerating, or when the engine is under a heavy load, the vehicle runs on both the engine and electric motor using battery power. Fuel efficiency is achieved when the vehicle starts to run at a constant speed as the Smoother-E automatic shift changes speed automatically for optimum fuel economy.

When decelerating, the vehicle's Smoother-E automatic shift automatically disengages clutch to prevent loss of regenerative energy while charging the battery at the same time. When the vehicle is idle, shifting the lever into the N (neutral) position will not only stop the engine automatically [shifting the lever back to D (drive) restarts the engine], but also will reduce the vehicle's emission and improve fuel economy.

With the Elf diesel hybrid already running on Japanese roads since last year, Balmadrid said it would not be long before the Philippines would also be able to enjoy the benefits that this type of vehicle could give to our environment.

"But as the research in the area of diesel hybrid is progressing, Isuzu will continue in pursuing more promising research to improve performance, efficiency and fuel utilization in today's diesel engines," promised Balmadrid.

The RAV4 grows up

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

WHEN THE TOYOTA RAV4 MADE ITS debut in 1994, it paved the way for a new genre of sport utility vehicles: the compact 4x4 SUV. The original RAV4 was cutesy, appealing to the younger set and the young-at-heart with its in-your-face, fun-to-drive panache, junior size and nimbleness.

The second generation RAV4 was not much bigger than the orig and was still a soft-roader not designed for rainforest and mud pit-crossing adventures although it was no longer built on a car platform. It was not as cutesy, but was still widely regarded as a chick car.

Now comes the 2006 RAV4, top billed by Toyota as "The Great SUV." The third generation RAV4 has literally grown up, being 355 mm longer, 110 (for the 4x2) or 70 mm (for the 4x4) wider and 65 mm taller than its predecessor while its wheelbase was increased by 170 mm to 2660 mm for more rear passenger leg room.

Outgrown

All of which implies that the RAV4 has outgrown its individualistic Generation Y positioning and is now being marketed as a yuppie SUV for smart, upscale young parents with two or three small kids. In other words, more young family-oriented with more passenger and cargo room and a bigger, stronger engine, for keener competition with the Nissan X-Trail and Honda CR-V.

Viewed frontally, the new RAV4 with its honeycomb grille looks almost the same as the preceding model. But when you see it full-length, then you realize that it has grown. The tailgate with the rear door-mounted spare tire appears similar, too, were it not for the larger, boomerang-shaped tail lights. You can distinguish the new 4x4 RAV4 from the 4x2 not only by the insignia on the back, but also by the presence of color-keyed overfenders—the 4x2 has none.

Under the hood throbs Toyota's 2.4-liter VVT-i (Variable Valve-Timing-intelligent) 4-cylinder, in-line DOHC, 16-valve gasoline engine capable of 224 Nm/4,000 rpm peak torque and 170 hp/6,000 rpm, up from the previous 2.0-liter engine's 148 hp. The 4-speed automatic transmission—the new RAV4 comes with AT only—of both the 4x2 and 4x4 models has Super ECT (electronic-controlled transmission). Electronic power steering and cruise control are standard. Top speed is still rated at 185 kph.

Smooth

Despite the increase in size and weight, the new RAV4 drives as smoothly as the outgoing model with carlike riding comfort. Trace this to the tensile strength of the rigid body, the supportively upholstered seats and the McPherson strut coil suspension up front and trailing-type double wishbone coil suspension at the rear. Disc brakes front and rear provide adequate stopping power.

When the front wheels start to slip on rough terrain, the 4WD system progressively transfers torque to the rear axle. Pressing a dashboard-mounted button locks the center differential into 4x4 mode for more traction. Otherwise, on paved roads, the RAV4 is in front-wheel-drive default mode. Unlike the RAV4 units sold in Malaysia, however, those sold here are not equipped with the Downhill Assist Control system that greatly improves the vehicle's off-road ability.

That the new RAV4 targets the young family market is obvious when you inspect the cabin. The snazzy three-tiered optitron meters may catch your eye, but what really impressed me was the enormous leg room at the rear. The back seat can be reclined for passengers to lean back and stretch their legs. It can also be folded flat or slid back and forth to increase cargo space.

Class

Executive class touches are supplied by the three-spoke steering wheel with integrated audio (for the MP3 compactible 6-disc in-dash CD player/tuner) and cruise controls, the aircon system with independent driver and passenger controls and the 10-way power driver seat. Premium leather and metallic trim enhance the tactile luxury of the instrument panel.

But it is in safety features that the new RAV4 outshines the competition. The 4x4 model has not only driver and front passenger SRS airbags, but also curtain shield and side airbags. ABS with EBD is standard on both the 4x2 and 4x4 variants, ditto head-impact protection, impact-absorbing body, 3-point ELR seatbelts fore and aft and an engine immobilizer system.

All these goodies come at a price: P1,785,000 for the 4x4 and P1,425,000 for the 4x2. Despite this SRP, will the new RAV4 grab pole position in the compact SUV market? Only time and sales records will tell.

* * *

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New tires and old tricks

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THE NOISE OF THE RALLY-BLUE Impreza WRX Sti was really becoming a distraction. It would hurtle down the long straight and then elegantly start a series of dramatic lift-off, oversteer slides, each drift making full use of the track's width. The sounds made by the blasting boxer four and of tires driven over the limits of traction were compelling to say the least.

I would have to wait for my turn at the four-wheel, turbocharged rally replica and it was my sincerest wish to get behind the pedals and let slip the dogs of slide myself. Right at the moment though, I was in a rather tame Nissan Teana executive sedan, plodding along an adjacent Noise, Vibration and Harshness test track at a decent clip, but nothing that would not fuss my mother-in-law though.

"Please listen to the lack of low frequency noise," said the Michelin test driver, "and now we will turn off the engine so you can hear the tires better." I wanted to ask him if he was serious, but before I could begin to speak, the engine and all of its hydraulic and electrical systems went dead. Let me just say there is no better way to get my attention at 90 kph than to turn off a car's engine. Listen intently I did.

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the press launch of the new Michelin Pilot Preceda. Held at the Taiwanese government's Automotive Research and Test Center in Lugang, Changhua County, the event brought together dealers and media from various parts of the Asia-Pacific region and displayed the new technologies and improved ability of this second generation Preceda.

At the entry level

Before you go out and swap your current rubber for these tires, we must put the product into perspective. While being a bonafide member of the Pilot lineup, Michelin's performance tire family, is it at the entry level of the hierarchy. Above the Preceda in both price and performance are three very capable tires, the Porsche OE Pilot Sport 2, the 300-kph rated street-legal Pilot Sport Cup and the four-groove Michelin F1, used in the race series of the same designation.

What the Preceda has over its fast fleet brethren is its adequate level of comfort and rather surprising level of ride silence. At the heart of its ability are the advances made in tread pattern and compound. Being an asymmetrical design allows the tire to specifically deal with the load and grip issues of either side of the car when cornering, resulting in a progressive and accurate character in sporting conditions.

The large blocks on the tires outside allow for a larger contact surface during raised lateral g's. A prominent center post ensures stable feedback to the driver, especially during speeds close to the 270-kph rating of the tire. Much like the hand cut grooves of the WRC tires of yesteryear, smaller inside blocks assist the rest of the tread pattern by helping evacuate standing water. All of these features are focused by the new sport compound formulation used by Michelin. Called Formula G, the system infuses a confidential amount and type of silica into the black carbon mixture of their tires that evens out the compound on the molecular level.

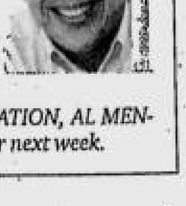
Good example

All in all, the product is a good example of an entry level sport tire for a wide range of applications. Again, there are better tires out there for more specific uses, but if you want something that can deal with the demands for both comfort and pace, this is something worth a try.

The comfort and silence characteristics of this tire are what should sell it to the mass market, but its ability at speed makes it interesting for wishing to motor in a more motivated manner, something successfully imprinted, with a searing hot brand, into the long-term memory of this jaded motoring hack. How'd they do it?

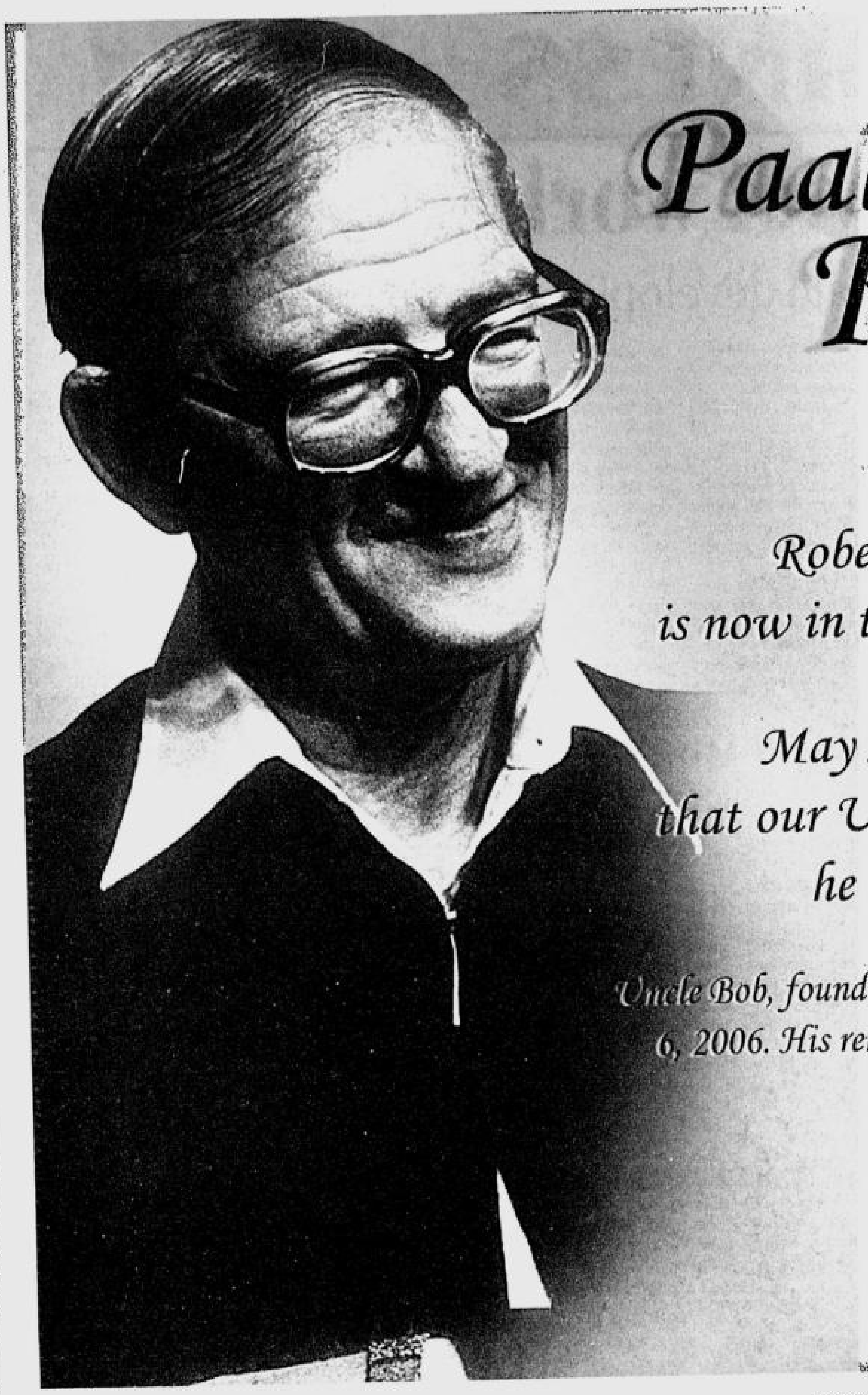
Simple, I occupied the passenger seat of the Impreza, with Michelin's Asia Pacific Motorsport head Regis Jeandenand at the wheel. The two of us are having a rather labored conversation somewhere over 200 kph. "Look here, see," said my wheelman, "it is straight at over 200," taking both hands off from the Sti's steering wheel. I think he also asked if I noticed that it was a silent tire at such a ludicrous speed. Not that I could tell of course, as the cabin of the Impreza went deathly mute and all I could hear was my heart about to burst out of my chest.

FULL TANK



Al Mendoza

DUE TO SPACE LIMITATION, AL MENDOZA's column will appear next week.



Paalam sa iyo, Kapuso ...

Our dearly beloved,
Robert "Uncle Bob" Stewart,
is now in the loving arms of our Creator.

May He be glorified by the life
that our Uncle Bob lived and by the way
he has touched our hearts.

Uncle Bob, founder of GMA 7, died in Phoenix, Arizona on April 6, 2006. His remains will be brought to Manila on April 29.

GMA
Kapuso ng bawat Pilipino

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." ***Matthew 11:28***

Adela Morales Dizon, M.D.

Peacefully joined our Creator
on April 10, 2006
at the age of 92.

Her bereaved sister, **Rufina Morales**; her children **Mercy & Ferdie, Minda, Mae & Charlie, Boy & Den** and **Medy**; her grandchildren **Francis, Maris, Paul, Chariz** and **Paula**; her relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Dizon residence in Cabambangan, Bacolor, Pampanga.

Interment will be on April 16, 2006 at the Bacolor Catholic Cemetery at 11:00 a.m.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

CAPT. TEOFILO T. CALIMAG, JR.

Retired Philippine Airlines Boeing 747-400 Captain

of Tuguegarao, Cagayan

who peacefully joined his Creator
on March 22, 2006

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude
and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered
Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy
and who in countless ways, condoled with
and comforted us in our
hour of bereavement.

CLASSIFIEDS

Inside information on handling BIR audit

Finally, a workshop that will reveal inside information on sure-fire ways to save money without compromising your integrity. Don't miss this very important event slated on May 3, 4, and 5, 1–5 p.m. at Holiday Inn Galleria Manila, Ortigas. CPE Credits will be given to CPA's.

Topics include Day 1: Letter of Authority; First, Second and Third Notice; Responsibility of Bookkeepers, Accountants. Auditors & Company Officers; Day 2: Handling of Report of investigation; Notice for Informal Conference; Preliminary and Final Assessment Notice; Day 3: BIR Subpoena Duces Tecum; DOJ Fiscal Duces Tecum; Preparing Counter Affidavit; Prepareation of Rejoinder; Fiscal Resolution; Ruling of Appeal to DOJ; etc. Registering for one day only is allowed, but people are encouraged to attend the whole program.

The seminar will have as its resource lecturer Prof. Emy Maestro, CPA; Founder of Tax Accountant Society, the National Organization of BIR Accredited Tax Agents; Founding Chairman of Auditor ng Bayan; and author of 14 books on Accounting and Auditing.

This seminar is sponsored by Porter and Miles, Inc., a premier training company on business, management, marketing, sales and human resource development, with office address at Suite 2502-C Tektite Tower East, Ortigas Center. Please call Mercy at 638-7719 / 20 for more information / reservation. Hurry! Call us now while there are still seats available.

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John 14:6

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MARIANO P. DEL ROSARIO	Chapel C-12, Q. C.	04/12/06; 12:30 P.M.	Paz Crematory

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This seminar is sponsored by Porter and Miles, Inc., a premier training company on business, management, marketing, sales and human resource development, with office address at Suite 2502-C Tektite Tower East, Ortigas Center. Please call Mercy at 638-7719 / 20 for more information / reservation. Hurry! Call us now while there are still seats available.

UN urges freer flow of workers

Relaxing laws on movement seen to aid developing nations

By Michelle V. Remo

AN ARM OF THE UNITED NATIONS IS urging the World Trade Organization (WTO) to step up efforts toward freeing the flow of workers among member economies, stressing that the potential overseas remittances to be gained may be enough to lift many developing countries like the Philippines.

"(The liberalization of movement of persons) has an important development dimension, and countries like the Philippines that have a good base of skilled workers would benefit from (such) a formal agreement," said economist George Manzano, speaking for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Escap) during the release of its 2006 Economic and Social Survey yesterday.

Manzano said the proposed liberalization of the movement of persons has been displaced in the WTO agenda by security issues. Although there is a need to raise the level of security amid international threats of terrorism, Manzano said Escap would still want to pursue the need to liberalize overseas employment.

Escap is pushing countries, especially developed ones, to relax restrictions on permanent employment of foreign workers, Manzano said.

He explained that overseas remittances tend to grow during times of low economic growth of home countries, as overseas workers are prompted to send more money to better support their families.

High overseas remittances therefore will partially offset any decline in economic output, Manzano added.

He noted that some developing member-countries of Escap are partly dependent on overseas remittances to support economic growth.

The $11.6 billion in overseas remittances that flowed into the Philippines last year accounted for 13.7 percent of the country's gross domestic product growth, Manzano said.

Other countries that benefited from huge overseas remittances last year were India, with $21.7 billion; China, $21.3 billion; and Thailand, $1.6 billion.

Manzano said that the liberalization of the movement of persons would help Escap member-countries address the problem of weak trickle-down effect of economic growth on employment.

In the 2006 Economic and Social Survey, Escap said that while economic growth normally reduces the level of unemployment, "further analysis indicates a weakening relationship between economic growth and employment creation" among various countries.

Should the liberalization of the movement of persons be adopted by the WTO, Manzano said, labor productivity and therefore economic growth, especially among developing countries, would be boosted.

He said Escap is likewise calling on governments to undertake measures that will reduce the transaction costs of sending overseas remittances.

S&P assigns B+ rating to JG Summit

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JG SUMMIT HOLDINGS INC. OF THE Gokongwei family commands a stable outlook from Standard & Poor's Ratings Services, according to an analyst of the credit rating firm.

S&P credit analyst Nancy Koh yesterday said in a statement that the stable outlook was due to expectations that JG Summit's core subsidiaries would continue to prosper from "established market positions in their respective industry segments."

Also, S&P said it assigned a "B+" corporate credit rating to JG Summit. It likewise assigned a "B+" rating to the company's $300 million in unsecured notes due in 2013. The notes were issued in January by JGSH Philippines Ltd., a special purpose vehicle wholly owned by JG Summit.

Koh said the B+ rating on JG Summit reflected heightened financial risk linked with the company's expansion and that of its subsidiaries in telecommunications and air transportation.

JG Summit is invested in various sectors including branded consumer foods through Universal Robina Corp., property development through Robinsons Land Corp., telecommunications through Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc., and airlines through Cebu Pacific.

The outlook also reflects the expectation that the group's liquidity position—or its ability to convert assets readily into cash—will be sustained, and that it will maintain continued discipline in its investment portfolio, S&P said.

What constrains the rating on JG Summit is the high level of transactions between related companies, volatile raw material costs and supply, and adverse foreign exchange movements, Koh said.

"These weaknesses are, however, offset by the company's established domestic market position in various core businesses, business diversification through key subsidiaries and affiliates, and a favorable cost structure," she said.

PSBank
PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK
A METROBANK SUBSIDIARY

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of stockholders of this Corporation will be held on **April 25, 2006, Tuesday, at 4:00 p.m. at the 19th Floor, PSBank Center, 777 Paseo de Roxas corner Sedeño St., Makati City**, to pass upon the following matters:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on April 28, 2005;
2. Annual report to the Stockholders;
3. Confirmation of all acts of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee and the Management;
4. Election of the members of the Board of Directors;
5. Amendments to Articles of Incorporation and Code of By Laws;
6. Appointment of the External Auditor;
7. Other matters.

In case you cannot attend the meeting in person and you wish to be represented thereat, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a proxy instrument to the **Office of the Corporate Secretary, 3rd Floor, PSBank Center, 777 Paseo de Roxas corner Sedeño St., Makati City.**

Only stockholders of record as of **March 13, 2006** shall be entitled to vote in the meeting.

Rolando A. Rodriguez
Corporate Secretary

Philippine Savings Bank Head Office: 777 Paseo de Roxas corner Sedeño St., Makati City

NDC to bankroll Mindanao airport

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT WILL borrow funds from the cash-rich National Development Co. (NDC) to jumpstart the airport project that is expected to improve commerce in northern Mindanao.

Speaking to reporters recently, Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) Assistant Secretary Robert Castañares said that up to P869 million will be sourced from the NDC to fund the initial phase of the Laguindingan airport project.

"This will be a bridge financing facility," he said, explaining that this is apart from the P100 million in equity which the DOTC has already poured into the project.

The Laguindingan airport in Misamis Oriental is being eyed as a replacement for Cagayan de Oro City's Lumbia airport, which is stricken by limitations in operating capacity.

In particular, Lumbia—despite its proximity to Cagayan de Oro—is situated on a plateau, and bounded on two sides by mountainous terrain, making it difficult for larger jet aircraft to fly in or out.

DOTC expects the project to cost as much as P5.8 billion.

Castañares said that the planned Laguindingan airport, on the other hand, will be built on a plain 30 kilometers outside Cagayan de Oro. The future airport's site will not have the hazards of the existing airport.

He added that the airport will have a runway of sufficient length to be classified as an international airport, although it will likely be used mainly as a regional hub for northern Mindanao.

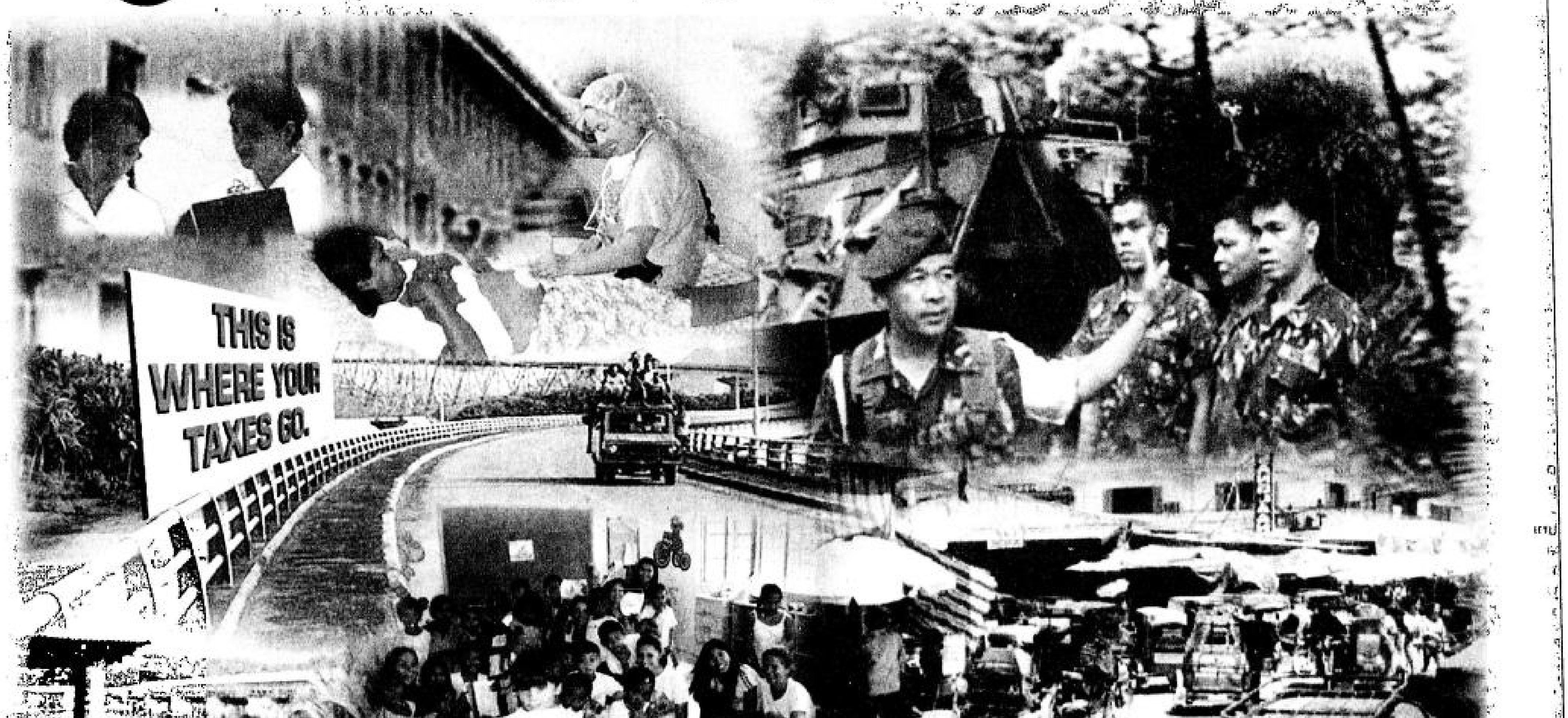
Castañares said the bidding for the Laguindingan airport project will start next month, and will likely take between three and four months to complete.

Actual construction of the airport will start in the first quarter of next year, and will run for two years.

Groundbreaking on the new airport was already held earlier this year with President Macapagal-Arroyo attending the ceremonies.

BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE PHILIPPINES 1904

MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS
bago ang April 17 deadline.



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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso** Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS
bago ang **April 17** deadline.
5 DAYS TO GO
Ang Ating Kontribusyon Sa Solusyon

FASHION FREAKS SPECIAL

Fashion fever!

Temperatures rose at the 2bU! headquarters as we dove headfirst into the fun and crazy world of fashion. We sent troops out to cover different fashion fiestas—from last week's Philippine Fashion Week, to SSI's stylish show in Cebu to Singapore's fab Fashion Festival.

Hot models, stunning collections, dressing tips, eye candies—we have them all here in our Fashion Freaks special.

PS. We also have a special one-on-one with Carrie Underwood. This American Idol, whose hit 'Jesus Take the Wheel' topped the Billboard Country Singles chart for weeks, has a special message for everyone this Holy Week

2bU!
to be young • to be you • to be young • To be you!

Point, click, bravo!

Seven student photographers take hundreds of shots at the Philippine Fashion Week. Turn to page C5 for our favorites

LAST WEEK'S PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK wasn't just exciting for models, designers, brands, professional photographers and fashion fans, it was also a special time for seven young student photographers who were tasked to capture the shows with their lenses.

Fashion Week, which was staged by Runway Productions, was a 10-day celebration with shows held at The Fort's NBC Tent and at Glorietta Activity Center. This year, it also launched the Student Photographers Apprentic Program. Seven talented students from different colleges and universities were hand-

POINT/ C5

Fab femmes in the Queen City

Text and photos by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

FOR MANY FASHIONABLE CEBUANAS, Marco Polo Plaza was the place to go recently with the Cebu launching of Metrobank's Femme Visa.

The launch had a fashion show featuring the spring/summer collections of Stores Specialists Inc.'s brands such as Salvatore Ferragamo, Anne Klein, Diesel, Lacoste, Nine West, Jessica, Marks & Spencer, Polo Ralph Lauren, Laundry by Shelli Segal, and Springfield. The models strutted down the runway in makeup from Bloom's latest makeup collection, courtesy of Beauty Bar.

Aside from regular models, Metrobank also tapped some of Cebu's most popular and high-profile ladies to represent the ideal

FAB FEMMES/ C4

ZEE Quarterly beauty editor Cheryl Carcel and TV host Jaja Chiongbian

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April 20 & 21		Hed Kandi Preparty @ Boracay	Waling-Waling
April 21		UNO Lounge (Feat. DJ Ace)	Zuzuni Bar
April 22		Hed Kandi Beach House @ Boracay	Hey Jude
		Bora Bound	
April 20	4pm	Chillout Session	Aria
	10pm	ManoMission (Feat. Manolet Dario & Bernard Mecio)	Aria
April 21	10pm	Embassy Club goes to Bora (Feat. DJ's Martin Pulgar & Owens Sun)	Cocomangas
April 22	10pm	HipHop Night (Feat. DJ Darel)	Club Paraw beachfront

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Singapore's fashion sling

By Pam Pastor

A LONG LINE OF PEOPLE IN varying degrees of fashion expression snaked around The Tent at Ngee Ann City, patiently waiting to be seated for the Topshop Unique/Topman Design fashion show. It was the eighth day of the Singapore Fashion Festival 2006, sponsored by the Singapore Tourism Board and produced in association with IMG Fashion-PICO.

British supermodel Lily Cole, the face of the festival, may have left Singapore by then but the enthusiasm for the 10-day fashion celebration had not waned. Clearly.

It was Singapore's sixth fashion festival and people tirelessly lined up day after day after day for the shows as they would for rock concerts. No big surprise. Because during SFF, models and designers are rock stars and the runway is their stage.

The pre-show area, which had been decorated by Nokia to match its L'Amour collection, was bustling with excitement. When told about the crowd waiting outside, Amir Afkami, international director of Arcadia Group Limited (the company that brings fashion goodness like Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins and Miss Selfridge to the world), said, "Excellent! That's what we like to hear."

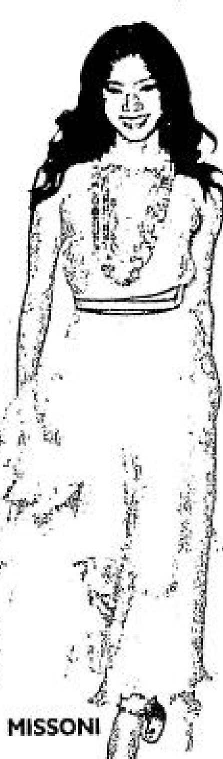
> Face of the festival Lily Cole had left by then but the tail end of the Singapore Fashion Festival was still one rockin' romp down the runway

Splashes of color

The show unveiled UK high street fashion brand Unique's Spring/Summer 2006 collection to the Singapore market. The brand, which is said to be a favorite of Madonna, Beyonce and Gwyneth Paltrow, is Topshop's most fashion-forward line. It was the first time Unique was shown outside London. There were a lot of fun pieces with splashes of color—skirts with suspenders, an orange kaftan dress that wouldn't look out of place both in the city and on the beach, and eyelet skirts.

The same fashion show also highlighted pieces from Topman Design's new collection. A lot of colors are in store for men this season—along with the injection of floral prints. Pinoy model Rocky Salumbides drew audible gasps from the crowd as he walked onto the runway wearing a yellow tank top emblazoned with palm trees.

After the show, Rocky was spotted mingling with people outside the tent. He was wearing a black Vigan City shirt. That's Pinoy pride for you.


MISSONI

People left Ngee Ann City and walked over to Topshop and Topman's Wisma Atria store for the after-party. Buckets filled to the brim with ice and bottles of beer, soda and water were strategically placed around the store. Girls sat down for manicures and other fun treats while others watched as jeans were customized right in front of their eyes. Topshop fans ran around the store, rifling through racks, eager to take advantage of the gift vouchers that had been handed out along with the goodie bags. It was a thrill to see the collection which had just been paraded on the runway already on the racks, ready to be tried on and bought.

While queuing at the cash register, a Canadian girl started talking to a group of British girls behind her.

"I love Topshop," she said, her big eyes sparkling.

"Do you have it in Canada?" one of the British girls asked.

"No, but I lived in London for a while. I don't think they have Topshop in the US either."

There was a collective gasp as the British girls tried to envision a world without Topshop.

"What would you do, right?" Ms Canada asked. They all nodded solemnly.

Phone-inspired fashion

That evening, another line of people waited for the next event—the Nokia fashion show, which was inspired by L'Amour, Nokia's collection of fashion phones. The show, which began with the L'Amour commercial and a short dance number, featured pieces from the ck Calvin Klein's Spring/Summer collection—clothes in rich neutrals that create an understated elegant look.

The next day, Robinsons opened its "Spring Inspiring" show with a Paris Hiltonesque model. She made her way down the runway, her teased blonde hair bobbing behind her. Robinsons used the show to launch four new brands: Coast from the UK, Trucco from Spain, Part Two from Denmark and Machka from Turkey. There was a lot of focus on layering—light layers of cropped jackets and thin cotton tops, boleros and tanks, fitted sweatshirts and button-downs. The Robinsons show was a study in contrast—colors and neutrals, femininity and edginess, masculinity and softness.

Saturday night was a big night for the fashion festival as people returned to The Tent excitedly for the Diane von Furstenberg show. It did not only showcase her Fall 2006 Working Girl collection but also celebrated the arrival of her first store in Singapore, set to open in Takashimaya Department Store this month. Before the show, people milled about the cocktails area, enjoying the overflowing Moët et Chandon, which was the festival's official champagne. The sweet hors d'oeuvre carried DVF's lips logo——bite-sized slices of creamy cheesecake with lips drawn on them and red lip-shaped chocolate pieces with chocolate and strawberry filling.

Iconic wrap dress

The show was highly anticipated and it did not disappoint. Aside from various incarnations of DVF's now iconic wrap dress (she introduced her jersey wrap dress in New York in 1972, sold five million of it by 1976 which resulted in her landing on the cover of Newsweek and the Wall Street Journal), other memorable pieces include a smocked dotted chiffon dress, a black geisha wrap with red sash, tuxedo shorts and herringbone beaded jacket. But the biggest hits were undoubtedly the pieces emblazoned with DVF's lips logo—the Midnight Kiss party dress, the Painted Lips crepe gown, the Painted Lips crepe skirt, sexy pumps and even the lip-shaped patent purse that some of the models carried.

CK REUTERS

People couldn't stop talking about the clothes long after the curtain call.

Ruffles, ruffles and more ruffles

The Couture Gems by Soo Kee and Style Weddings show kicked off Sunday, the last day of the fashion festival. It was brilliant in concept. Singapore's top bridal designers—Ted Wu, Frederick Lee and Kim of Divine Couture—collaborated with Soo Kee Jewellery to design signature wedding bands inspired by their latest bridal collections. The show itself was an explosion of ruffles, slits, fishtails and pink bows. Yes, pink bows.

Over 25 events in 10 days—and it all came to an end with Missoni's new collection which was presented at the closing show, fresh from Milan Fashion Week. Fashion's big heart was evident at the Missoni show, where they began the night with a call to raise awareness about the condition of physically disabled children in Singapore. Missoni Singapore has adopted the Society for the Physically Disabled and is asking people for help. A video of the young beneficiaries was shown as different personalities from Singapore—artists, celebrities and even ex-models—hit the ramp for a good cause. A haunting version of the song "Que Sera Sera" played and soon, the main show was underway. Pieces were both classic Missoni and modern—light, colorful, breezy fabrics, playful patterns, striped shirts and dresses, bikinis and trunks, eye candy in various forms.

Once again, Rocky Salumbides' fans were in full force. He elicited wolf whistles and even screams from the crowd.

The Missoni show—and this year's Singapore Fashion Festival—closed to thunderous applause. The models posed for one final photo before making their exit, their shrieks of jubilation heard from backstage.

The Singapore Fashion Festival was pretty much like the famous Singapore Sling—a wild mix, a variety of fashion flavors coming together for a grand old good time.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

STORES TO HIT IN SINGAPORE

Mark your maps. Fashion-forward Singapore is home not just to gigantic malls but boutiques of quality and quirky bounty

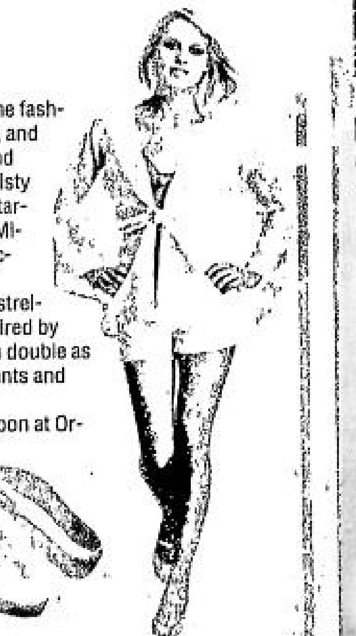
By Pam Pastor

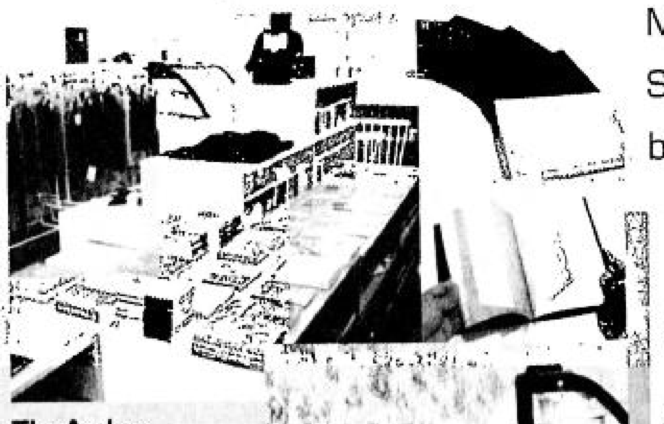
ANYONE WITH A MAP CAN FIND SINGAPORE'S GIGANTIC malls. That's a no-brainer. But uncovering some of the city's big boutique secrets is a greater thrill.

Our hot finds? Philip Starck-designed sneakers, black Puma pants that reveal patterns when pressed against your body, Nudie jeans and other great Nordic selections, sushi keychains and crazy fun Lomo cams.

Venue

Location: 44 Club St., Singapore
The digits: +6563230640
The details: Puma has been rocking the fashion boat with some hot collaborations, and Venue houses a lot of them—Puma and Neil Barrett's 96 Hours, Puma and Christy Turlington's Nuala, Puma and Philip Starck's Puma Starck, Puma by Yasuhiro Mihara and soon, Puma by Alexander McQueen.
Hot picks: Jackets from 96 Hours, Rastrello's WNS by 96 Hours (they were inspired by '50s motor boots), yoga wear that can double as lounge wear from Nuala, the magic pants and Puma Starck shoes
Extras: Venue will open a new store soon at Orchard Road.
Virtual visit: www.venue.com.sg



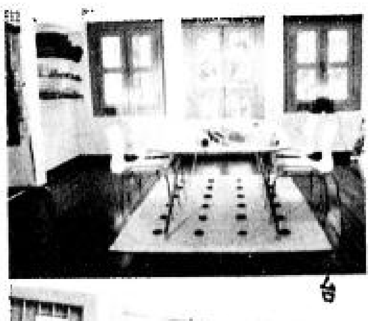


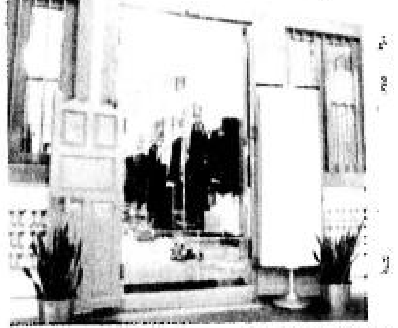
The Asylum

Location: 22 Ann Siang Rd., Singapore
The digits: +6563242289
The details: Experimental, contemporary, fun, even slightly crazy. The Asylum feels almost like your rich eccentric friend's house, if she put together all her hot finds from all her travels in one room. There are clothes, CDs, books, shoes, accessories, magazines and a whole slew of fun, artsy selections. The place is occasionally transformed into a gallery and is a favorite venue for events launching emerging young artists.
Hot picks: Kubrick toys, Visionaire collectibles, one-of-a-kind accessories, sushi keychains, Book Smarts notebooks and Lomo cams
Virtual visit: www.theasylum.com.sg. This site is a must-visit. It's almost as fun as being in the store.

Style Nordic

Location: 39 Ann Siang Rd., Singapore
The digits: +6564239114
The details: Style Nordic brought to Singapore different brands from Sweden, Finland and Denmark, providing a sampler of ultra-cool Scandinavian design under one roof. It's a mad mix of fab things: clothes, tableware, chairs and even carpets. Managing director Jonas Ericsson wants to provide "an edgier shopping experience for jaded consumers."
Hot picks: Nudie jeans, Kateha handmade carpets, Offect chairs, clothes by Rodebjer
Virtual visit: www.stylenordic.com

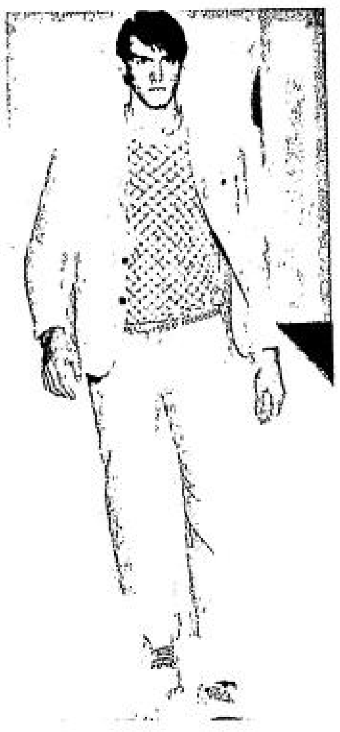




PRINTS aren't just for ladies.

Chatting with a top man

Arcadia Group Limited's Amir Afkami talks about Topman, the Philippine market and hot essentials that men should be buying



PLAY with layers.

BYE BYE bootcut, hello drainpipes

By Pam Pastor

AMIR AFKAMI DOESN'T HAVE it easy. As group international director of Arcadia Group Limited—the company behind brands like Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins and Miss Selfridge—it is his responsibility to take care of these brands outside the UK. But he seems to enjoy the job.

In an interview before the Topman/Topshop show at the recent Singapore Fashion Festival, Afkami, who was wearing a Topman suit, talked about Topman, the Philippine market and hot essentials that men should be buying.

Topshop and Topman have been in the Philippines for a few years now and Afkami says they are pleased with the local market and with the Robinson's group, which helped them bring the labels to the country.

"We are very happy with how we're working with Robinson's. The customers in Manila genuinely want to be fashionable. They're on the edge, they don't know if they want to do it or not. They go in and they need to be encouraged within the store. That's where the staff comes in—to help them go over that barrier."

He says that Pinoy shoppers are like other young shoppers in the world, too. "Everyone wants to be independent. As a young person, you want your independence, you want to be cool, you want to be seen, you want to stand out. The way that's expressed is through what you wear."

Afkami admits that trying to find one's fashion identity can be hard. "Men's wear is difficult. Men go in and if there are too many choices, they find it difficult to make a decision."

But Topman might have the answers. "Topman has developed quite strongly over the past few years. It's got attitude as a brand. It's not just a men's wear brand. It's very brave, it's got courageous designs."

Topman's new collections offer a lot of color and interesting choices for men. "The ranges this season are very, very attractive. They're colorful. What young men want is not just another same old T-shirt. They want something that makes them stand out, but not so much that their mates point to them," Afkami says.

He talks about two emerging trends—the preference for dressing a little more formally and the return of drainpipes. "There's a little more tendency for formal dressing—maybe a jacket with your denims, with a casual shirt. And another thing is, we're now going back to the drainpipes, straight-legged pants. We're seeing more and more of that."

Like many, he believes that music plays a part in shaping fashion. "The influences are the indie bands of the moment. Young guys wearing a cardigan on top of a T-shirt—that's the kind of feel that's coming in at the moment."

Some must-haves for men? "They must have denim, the humor T-shirts, cool T-shirts. I think we're talking about layers on top of that. A shirt that's got a style to it with a jacket on top. A lot of them also wear these very thin scarves at the moment. Shoes are very much [dependent on] people's tastes, so that can go in different directions. A lot of people like wearing branded Converse All-Star-looking type of sneakers while some of them are wearing pointy shoes."

According to Afkami, the fashion future of men seems bright. "Men are becoming more fashionable, they're understanding fashion more and that's very encouraging for us."

For us, too.

Luxe looks for less

NOT EVERYONE CAN AFFORD WHAT'S paraded down the runway—hell, most of us can't. But you can achieve runway looks on a budget. Check out our pocket-friendly tips.

CK CALVIN KLEIN

Overall look: Understated elegance

Key pieces: Basics in neutrals and khakis

Pocket-friendly alternatives: Giordano, Bench, Bayo, Kamiseta, Plains and Prints

DIANE VON FURSTENBERG

Overall look: Feminine and flirty with a kick

Key pieces: Wrap dresses, of course, and skirts with wild prints

Pocket-friendly alternatives: Culte Femme, X by Vic Barba, Kashieca, Karimadon, Petit Monde and Urban and Co.

MISSONI

Overall look: "I'm going on a cruise and I might never come back"

Key pieces: Colorful knits, striped anything

Pocket-friendly alternatives: Lulu Tan Gan for the knits, YRYS for the stripes and bold colors

TOPSHOP UNIQUE/TOPMAN DESIGN

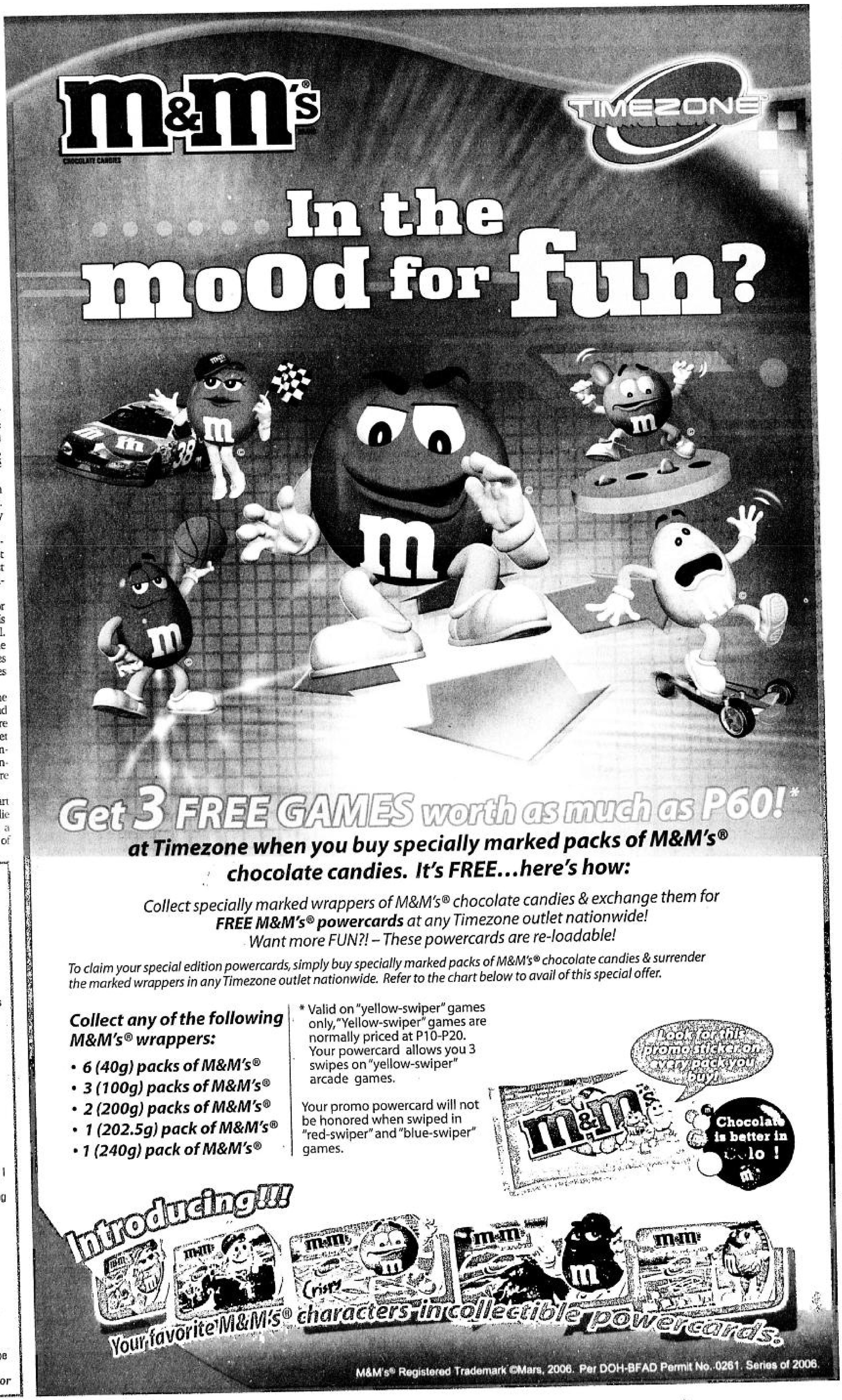
Overall look: Edgy high street glam

Key pieces: Colorful button-downs for men; fun, flirty pieces for girls

Pocket-friendly alternatives: For men, Solo, Details Trading and Novecento. For women, Freeway, XY Shop, Tango

But, of course, the best place to visit would be your favorite *ukay* haunt—just be ready for dust and hours of digging.

Bianca Consunji and Pam Pastor



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Fab femmes in the Queen City

PINK caftan paired with floral pink bikini bottoms from Marks & Spencer

From page C1

Metrobank woman—the "Woman on top."

Nine women were chosen: "Style File" television host Jaja Chongbian, furniture manufacturer Sonia Yuvallos, businesswoman June Ugarte, furniture manufacturer and fashion boutique owner Sandy Puray, entrepreneur Therese Sabarra, Havaianas distributor Aimil Sarmiento, pastry chef Gayle Urgello, and sisters Leigh and Cheryl Carcel.

Leigh Carcel, who is a lingerie and swimwear designer, is features editor of Zee Quarterly magazine, while Cheryl is a medical doctor and Beauty/Trends editor of the same publication.

The event, hosted by Miss World runner-up Karla Bautista, had guests sampling Beauty Bar makeovers and even fortunetelling. Lucky guests also won Beauty Bar products, Nine West bags and Ferragamo products. The Femme of the Night, Cebu's Margot Osmeña, won a weekend stay at the Marco Polo Plaza.

Metrobank Femme Visa features a credit finance system tailor-made for women-on-the-go. Cardholders are given priority access to job openings suitable to their qualifications via the JobsDB alert service. Metrobank also holds Career Femme Sessions exclusively for its target market, covering topics such as financial management, career strategies, plus fashion and beauty tips.

Another service, Femme Works, provides discounts, cash coupons and free items to cardholders. This is different from the Femme Rewards, wherein members can exchange credit points for items of their choice, and the monthly Fab Femme Friends selection, which entitles a monthly winner to either a P10,000 shopping credit to her Metrobank Femme Visa or a makeover by Mega magazine.

The event was led by Metrobank president Anne Young, and the Card Corporation team composed of chair Cindy Valenzuela, vice chair Angie Dy-Buncio, first vice president Aloy Alday, assistant vice president Tina Perez, and Femme brand manager Alesandra Ty.

WHITE caftan paired with a pink plaid bottom from Marks & Spencer

RIGHT: elegant silk sheath from Laundry by Shelli Segal and accessories by Salvatore Ferragamo

BATHROBE and boxers from Calvin Klein Underwear

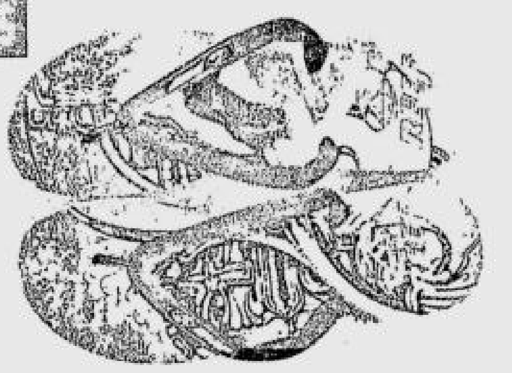
COOL and casual fashion from Springfield

Life's a beach

SUMMER, BEACHES and carefree attitudes have always gone hand-in-hand with the surf-inspired cult brand Reef.

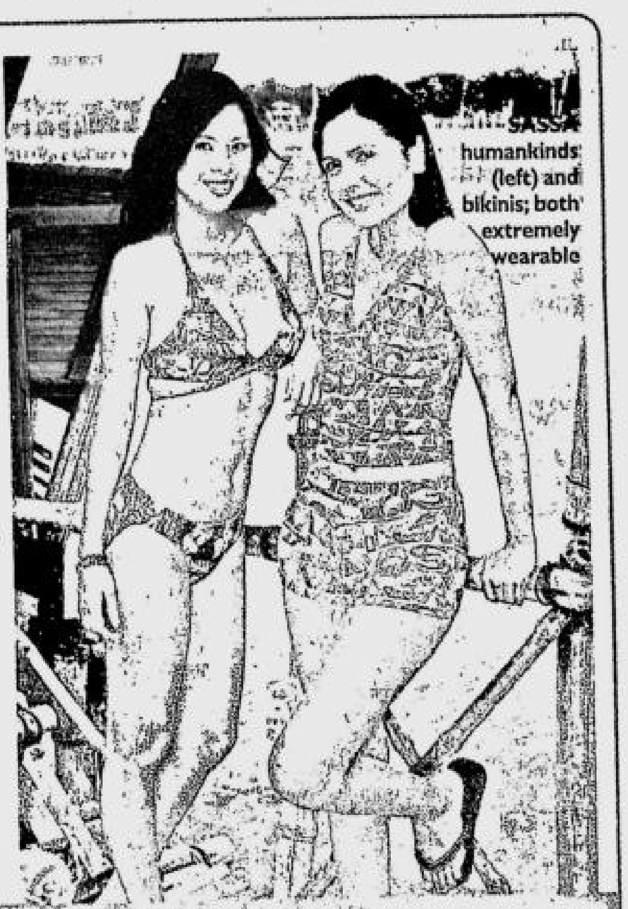
Reef is a fusion of cool products, extreme sports, hip music and mind-blowing performance. Reef is a balance of fun, lifestyle and commitment to building fashionable surf-inspired products for guys and girls.

Available at TiO2, Greenbelt 3.



FLIP-FLOP your way through summer.

BIKINIS add length to legs for petite ladies while boy shorts help trim down the hips.



SASSA humankinds (left) and bikinis; both extremely wearable

How to pick a swimsuit

BUYING THE RIGHT SWIMSUIT for your body type is the key to looking good in swimwear. No one, save for a blessed few, looks perfect in swimwear. For those of us who have "real" bodies, choosing the right cut, color and style are key to looking and feeling great on the beach, by the pool or anywhere Summer 2006 takes you.

Sassa has launched its 2006 swimsuit collection with real women with real bodies in mind. The collection has a swimsuit for just about every body type.

Here are a few tips on how to get the best swimsuit for you this summer:

- Before buying a swimsuit take note of where your eye is first drawn to on the suit. Chances are when people look at you wearing it, that's the first place their eyes will fall as well. Make sure you are accentuating the best parts of your figure and not the parts you'd rather keep to yourself.
- To give yourself a boost in the bust area, Sassa has taken the particular needs of its customers in mind by adding special removable "bust enhancing" pads to a number of its swimsuit tops.
- For those with heavy hips, thighs or backsides, boy shorts are not just good for hiding your extra "assets" but for looking oh-so-stylish in the sun. Sassa swimsuits with boy-short bottoms are far from ordinary as they come in the most cheerful, bright colors and prints.
- If you are petite, a high-cut leg on the swimsuit makes your legs look longer. Sassa bikinis are sexy without being too revealing. Contrary to popular belief, the bikini is not exclusively for the super-thin runway model. Sassa bikinis are completely wearable—supermodel figure or not!

Sassa swimsuits can be found in the Sassa Activewear boutique on the 2/L, Ali Mall, and in stores such as The Landmark, Robinsons Department Stores, Shopwise and Super SM Hypermarts. Also available nationwide in stores such as Mart 1 and Gaisano.

Visit www.sasssa.com.ph or e-mail sassa@barbizonfashion.com

Top choices

STRIPES hit the season.

WHAT COULD BE A BETTER TIME than during the summer season to show off those floral, striped and bright-colored outfits?

Topshop has a great summer collection of stylish, up-to-the-minute shorts, capri pants, blouses, knitwear, jeans and skirts that spell effortless, hip style wherever you go.

Take a breather in Topshop's comfortable and stylish shorts, polo shirts, capri and jersey dresses. Liberty floral prints, candy spots and stripes are mixed with summer brights. The collection also includes floral dresses and ultra-feminine blouses, and its '60s hip revival of pop art pieces, spots and stripes on shift dresses, shell tops, pencil skirts and skinny jeans.

Topshop stores are in Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Shangri-La Mall, Glorietta II, The Podium, The Power Plant Mall and Alabang Town Center. Topman branches, meanwhile, are located at Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, The Podium and the Power Plant Mall.

SUMMER dress with a twist

New promo deadline

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF entries to the Challenge the Bert Lozada Swim School (BLSS) has been extended to 6 p.m., April 21.

Free swimming lessons will be given to 15 Metro Manila readers who will submit the best essays on how much they fear the water and why they would like to conquer that fear.

The promo is jointly sponsored by BLSS and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Call the INQUIRER Marketing Department, 8978808 loc. 259 or 263; or the BLSS at 0917-700SWIM (7946), 5891982, 5635532 and 5628041.

Summer splash

AQUA blue, lime green, orange and yellow stripes alternate in this boy-leg bottom worn with a lime-green tube top.

LIFE'S A BEACH, AND NOW IS THE BEST time to make a great summer splash at SM!

Girls just wanna have fun with the most playful of swimsuits in fun floral prints, sunkissed stripes and boho tie-dye designs. You'll be a babe matching these with tank tops, baby tees, baby shorts and cool cabana pants.

Hunks are hot in board shorts and tees with scenic prints of holiday destinations as well as symbols of the season—tropical flowers, waves and sea creatures.

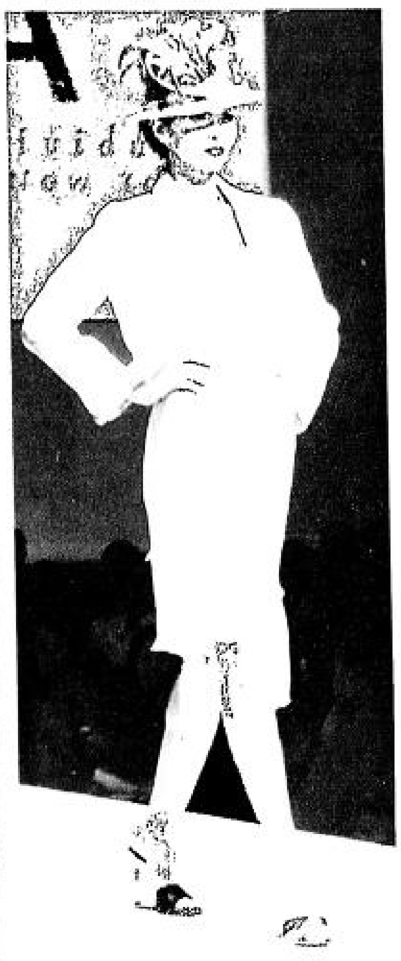
The collection is available at the Girls and Boys Teens Departments of all SM stores.

FASHION: AVAILBLE AT ALL SM STORES
PHOTOGRAPHY: ERWIN BARLETA
LOCATION: VILLA DIAZ RESORT

SURF babe. Baby-pink tee with surf prints

Jay Magbanua from De La Salle University got his jumpstart when a photographer neighbor gave him a crash course on the profession. One of his major influences is photographer Jay Javier

'Fashion photography combines two of my passions—fashion and visual communication,' says Ronald Carlo Bañares of UP Diliman, who discovered photography while taking it as a class requirement. As a budding photographer, RC felt a bit of the pressure but remained resolute



Point, click, bravo!

From page C1

picked and given the chance to click away at the shows.

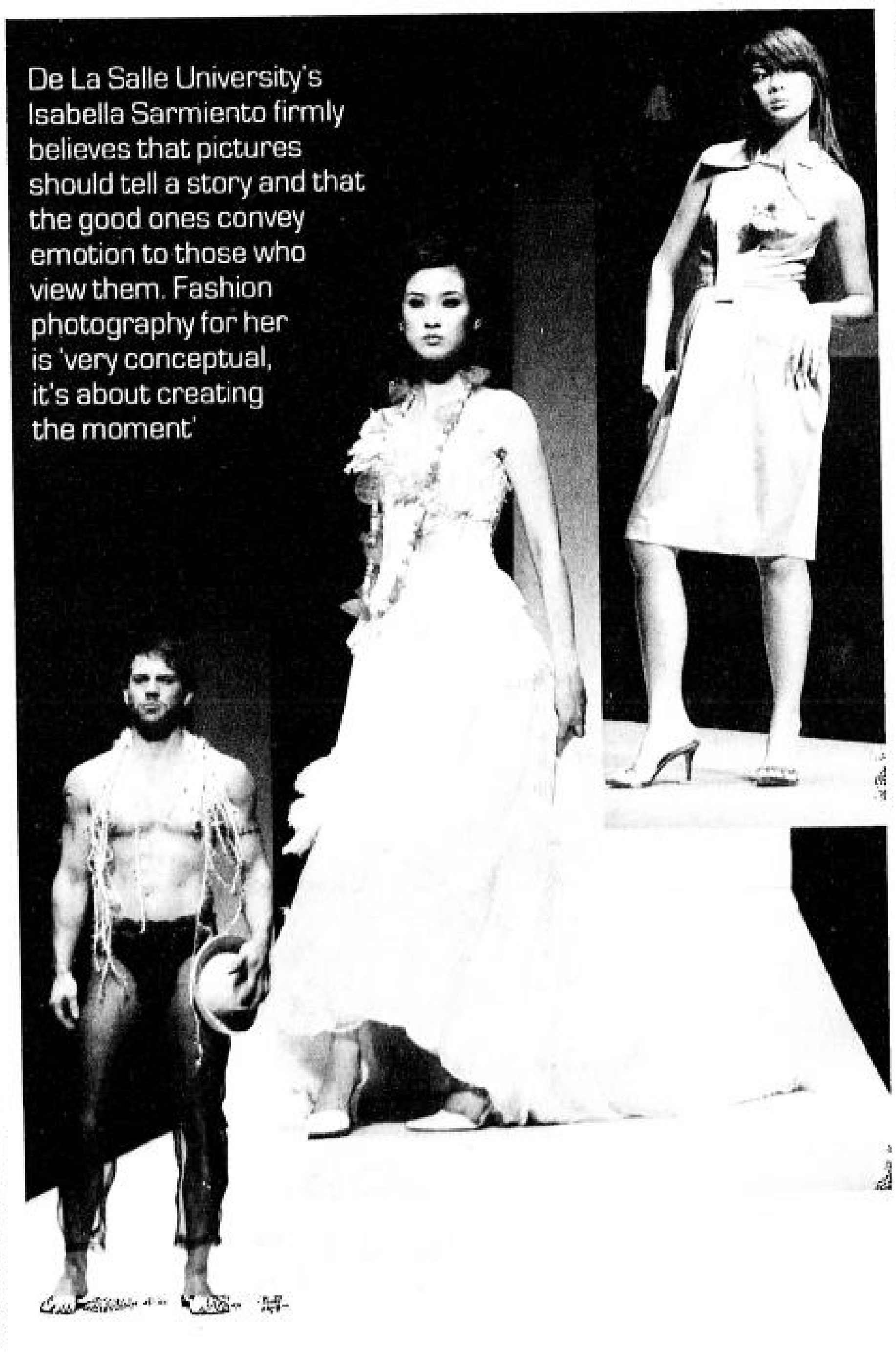
Armed with Sony's Cyber-shot DSC-R1, the shutterbugs took their seats in a world of frontrowers and celebrities, trend and style reports, backstage action and fast-paced shows.

Let your eyes feast on their outputs. You might be looking at the future of fashion photography.

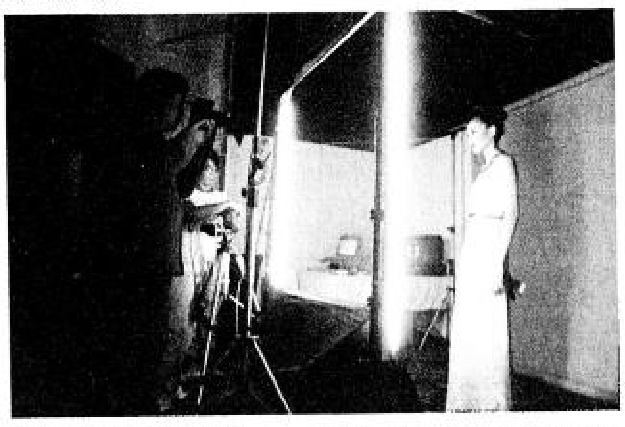
Atenean Raphael Atienza or RA, began his love affair with the camera when he spotted an SLR lying around at home and began tinkering with it. He admires the work of a Latin American photographer whose pictures he describes as solid and surreal at the same time

Deborah Marie Gianan of the University of Santo Tomas admires Bien Bautista for his solemn, stand-out photographs that carry a uniquely Filipino flavor

Catherine Joy Aquino loves mixing portrait and fashion photography and continues to hone her skills through work at the Student Publication Office of De La Salle-College of St. Benilde. She sees photography as an endless learning process



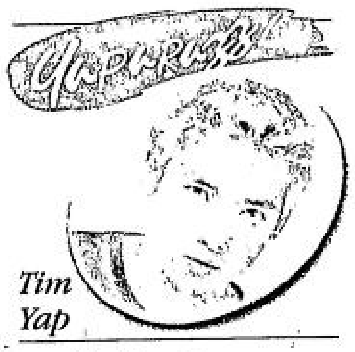
De La Salle University's Isabella Sarmiento firmly believes that pictures should tell a story and that the good ones convey emotion to those who view them. Fashion photography for her is 'very conceptual, it's about creating the moment'



Charles Custodio from De La Salle-College of St. Benilde admires Sacha Dean Biyan, a former aeronautical engineer who now faithfully photographs the world's vanishing tribes. Charles takes an avant-garde approach to his photos and feels 'lucky to be given the chance to experience participating in a big event, learning how to conduct myself and producing good pictures for Philippine Fashion Week'

Let Him take the wheel

How 'American Idol' winner Carrie Underwood made me look at Jesus in a new light



Tim Yap

WHEN I HEAR THE NAME Carrie, I am reminded of the blood-drenched prom queen of the '80s Stephen King horror classic. Two decades later, that Carrie's coffin has been nailed shut. A new Carrie has resurrected.

The new Carrie I am referring to is **Carrie Underwood**, last year's "American Idol" winner. **Roslyn Reyes** of Sony told me to expect her call. After three days, the phone rang.

In fact, I was just chatting with her using my new Samsung X700 phone—yes, the onyx black phones CEOs use. Its state-of-the-art video recording and messaging made it possible for me to tape my conversation with Carrie. I even asked her to sing a few songs from her "Some Hearts" album from Sony BMG, her first after winning the "American Idol" tilt last season.

On the US charts, this idol has been making new history. Consider this—she has sold more than 314,000 units in her first week of release, making her the highest debuting new artist (since SoundScan began) and thus earning the distinction of being the highest chart-topping female "American Idol" star to date. It ranked No. 2 on the Billboard 200.

WEARING their faith around their necks

Jesus in the country

Speaking of two, the reason for this ranking may have been her double whammy of choices for her "Carrie-r" (pun intended) single. "Jesus Take the Wheel," despite its country-sounding format, has been doing quite well, considering that Christian country music is not exactly a chart-topper because of the religious message that it carries. Then again, on the film side, look at the past year's "The Passion of the Christ."

Observe also people's penchant for wearing the rosary around their necks. **Richard Gutierrez** is one avid collector of rosaries. **Edwin Aguilar**, MTV's resident makeup artist, makes special giant rosaries that is the rage now amongst stylists, and MTV VJs **Cindy Kurleto** and **KC Montero** wear one each every time they host their shows. I wear mine to sleep, been doing so for years now. I used to have nightmares but it all stopped when I started wearing a rosary around my neck to bed. I just feel safer when I know that I am protected. Methinks there really is a renewed search for spirituality these days—but we all know that already.

So why did she choose "Jesus Take the Wheel" for her first single? She answered nonchalantly, without breaking into preachy prose. "It's a great song with a great message. It just seemed to fit. I felt great the first time I heard it."

It's about somebody who's driving "low on faith and gasoline, but going way too fast." And then before she knew it, she just crashed. And then Carrie sings, "Jesus, take the wheel, take it from my hands, coz I can't do this on my own. I'm letting go, so give me one more chance…" It has been quite some time since Gary V's "Take Me Out of the Dark" had a follow-up, so I think this is it. Something for young people to ponder on—not too hallelujah preachy but with lyrics so real that it can be about your friend, neighbor, mate, or even you.

I also like her second single titled "Some Hearts." It's about "always stumbling around in circles, but I must have stumbled into something. Look at me—am I really alone with you? I wake up feeling like my life is worth living. Can't recall when I last felt that way. I guess it must be all the stuff you're givin'—never knew it could be like this…" She could be singing about her relationship with Someone Up There, too, ya know.

Before and after 'Idol'

Before "American Idol," she was in college taking up journalism. Her love for the field hasn't waned, as she has been writing for "American Idol" magazine and she intends to pursue it even as she is busy with her musical career. Her life now is very different from the life she used to lead, "Every aspect of my life is really so different—I wake up and get ready for shows and do a lot of interviews. I do a lot of touring around the US. There's nothing that I do that I don't enjoy." She is also a VJ for CMT—the MTV of Christian music.

Who among the present crop of contenders is her favorite? She politely answered, "I have no particular favorites but I have a strong feeling that it will be a guy who will bring home the title." Asked why a preference for country music, she said, "It's an awesome genre, and I want to bring it to a different awareness and give it another dimension. People should be open and listen to other forms of music and art."

Her message to her fans is to "just keep at it. I'm living proof that you can be completely normal one day and then all of a sudden achieve all your dreams the next." And her final words to me, "Give things a shot. Put aside your fears and just go for it."

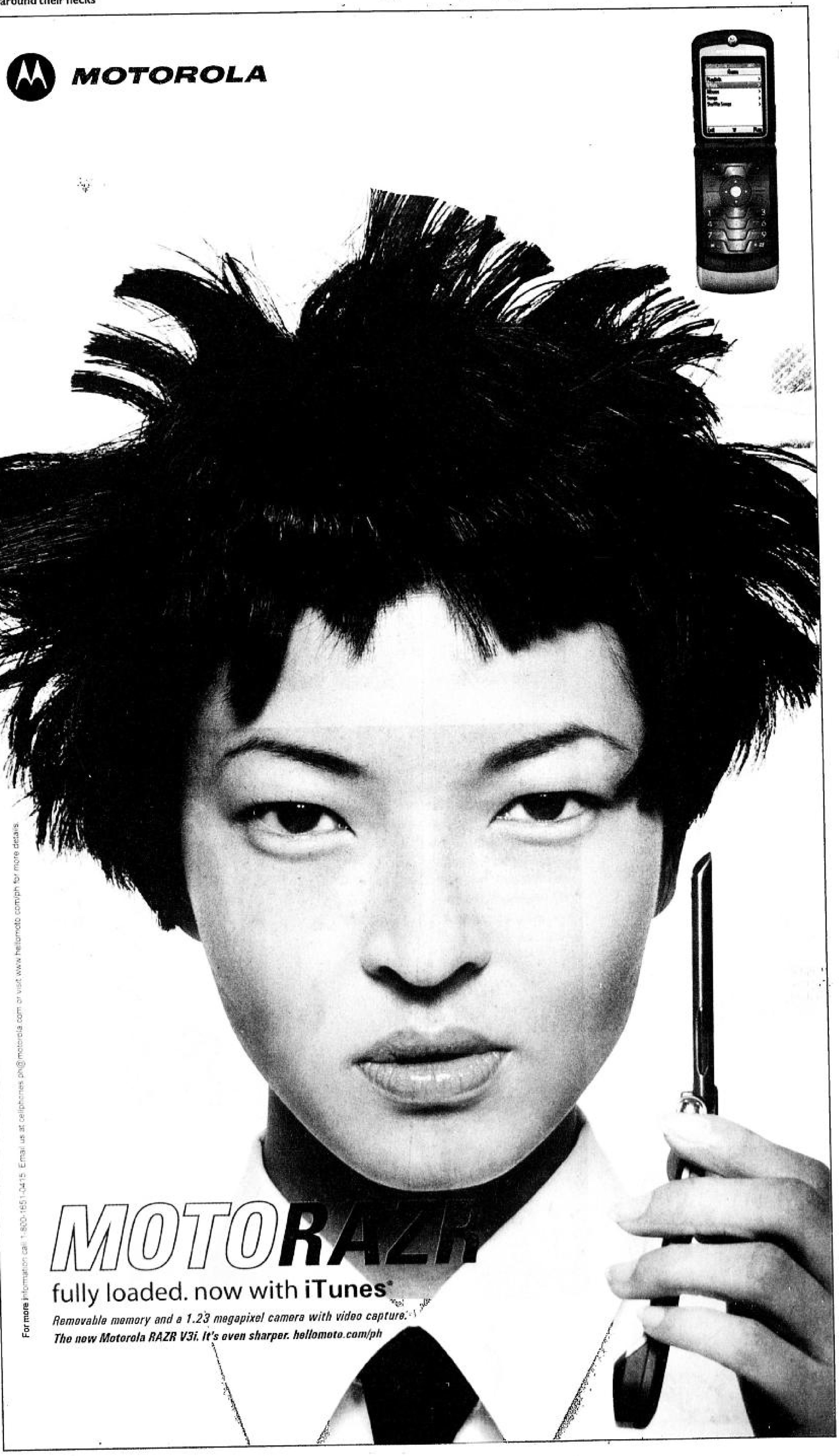
My other source of inspiration, book author **Sark**, said, "Choosing succulence is a deliberate act of personal revolution. It means waking up, embracing your true self, studying your patterns and letting out your most alive self—we all have one."

So this Lenten season, take the time to step back and listen to yourself, search deep down, find your faith once again, and then celebrate it wildly. Welcome to the center of your life. Bling it on, partyphiles.

YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL. Because she lets 'Jesus Take the Wheel'

Carrie Underwood
Some Hearts

FROM ONE BLONDE TO ANOTHER. Carrie Underwood is capturing not just 'some hearts.'


MOTOROLA
MOTORAZR
fully loaded. now with iTunes®
Removable memory and a 1.23 megapixel camera with video capture.
The new Motorola RAZR V3i. It's even sharper. hellomoto.com/ph
For more information call 1-800-1651-0415. Email us at cellphones.ph@motorola.com or visit www.hellomoto.com/ph for more details.

■ BUSINESS / B1

OFW money jumps 14% to $1.8B despite slowdown in workers' deployment

■ WORLD / A18

Attack of suicide bombers on a Sunni Muslim prayer meeting kills 57 in Karachi

■ WORLD / A17

Italian PM Berlusconi refuses to concede election won by rival

■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-6

Inside Heart Evangelista's closets: Art, jewelry, girlish fashion/passions

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday April 13, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 126 / P18 website: www.inq7.net

BIR chief's presence panics tax-evading shopkeepers

ANG 'DI PAG BAYAD NG TAX AY PARANG NAGNAKAW, KASALANAN YAN!

THE APPEARANCE OF THE country's tax chief in a rundown Metro Manila mall sends shopkeepers scrambling for their shutters.

Jose Mario Buñag, commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), is hunting for re-

BIR/ A5

There'll be no INQUIRER issues on Friday and Saturday in observance of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Publication resumes on Easter Sunday.

THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION. The yearly reenactment—also a tourist-attraction—by penitents of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in Cutud, San Fernando, Pampanga, is superimposed on the stained glass depicting the Resurrection of Christ inside Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/EDWIN BACASMAS

AFP clears four generals

Top brass avoid media, release report on gov't TV

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE MUCH-AWAITED MILITARY FACT-FINDING REPORT on the "Hello Garci" scandal has cleared three generals accused of conspiring to rig the 2004 elections in President Macapagal-Arroyo's favor.

A fourth general with supposed links to the opposition was also absolved.

Navy chief Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga, who headed the five-man fact-finding board, avoided media grilling by announcing the findings over the government television station last night.

The fact-finding body cleared Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Gabriel Habacon and retired Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko of allegations that they took part in cheating for Ms Arroyo.

AFP/ A5

Too little, too late, says opposition of Mayuga report

By TJ Burgonio, Michael Lim Ubac and Luige A. del Puerto

OPPOSITION SENATORS WEREN'T A BIT surprised by the report of a military fact-finding board that cleared three generals accused of helping President Macapagal-Arroyo rig the 2004 presidential election.

An opposition congressman said it was a case of "too little, too late."

"What took Malacañang so long to authorize the release of the report [on the wiretapping scandal]? If it's correct that those generals are indeed innocent, withholding the release for months was most unfair to them as they were left twisting in the wind during the interim," Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez said.

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson said there was no reason to expect an honest report.

"Everybody is a hostage of the other—from the Commander in Chief to the top military officials who got involved in election cheating and were the subject of the Mayuga investigation," Lacson said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said that as expected,

TOO LITTLE/ A5

NATIONAL ARTISTS

Palace assures 6 sure of awards; more eyed

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine Avendaño

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY ALL BUT confirmed that it would be adding more names to the list of National Artist awardees this year, even as it insisted that the process of choosing the final list of recipients was not yet complete.

In a bid to explain the snafu that followed the Palace move to withdraw the announcement of the awardees only hours after making it public the other day, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita clarified that the conferment of the award on the six nominees, led by the late actor-director Fernando Poe Jr., would remain, denying speculations that some of the names would be taken out.

In fact, there might even be more names to be announced, which was why the announcement of the list of awardees was "premature," Ermita told reporters in Baguio City.

Cecile Guidote Alvarez, the presiden-

PALACE/ A5

Judas phallic rites symbol of protest

By Rosario C. Lucero
Contributor

(An award-wining essayist and fictionist, the author has a Ph.D. in English and is professor of Philippine Studies at UP Diliman. The following is a digest of a lecture she delivered last month at the UP College of Arts and Letters)

IN RURAL PHILIPPINES, WHERE THE mall is not yet the hub of all activity, Black Saturday is the quietest day of the year. It is a day of sobriety and reflection as everyone awaits the Easter vigil Mass on late Saturday evening.

But in a barrio in Antique of Panay island, it is the noisiest day of Holy Week. All day the people's energy centers around the making of a giant effigy, parts of which various barrio folk contribute. Then, at 6 p.m. in the evening the giant effigy of Judas—with a giant wooden phallus sticking out through a slit in his robe—is paraded around the barrio with much noise and fanfare. The parade ends at the barrio plaza, where a tripod of tall bamboo poles has been erected and from which dangles a noose of abaca rope. The noose is slipped around Judas's neck, a fuse

JUDAS/ A4

HE'S HOT. Judas' effigy is burned; his private parts blasted.

BEACH BABE
How can you tell she's going to Boracay? She's (barely) dressed to hit the water.

JESS YUSON

Businessmen's solomonic wisdom lends to 'Nanay'

By Blanche S. Rivera

THOSE WHO ARE KIND TO THE POOR lend to the Lord, King Solomon said. There is a group of businessmen in the Philippines that has taken this to heart.

The Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals (BCBP), a big but low-key group of 30,000 entrepreneurs and professionals, has been putting its money where its mouth is for three years now.

The BCBP has released some P4.7 million in loans to 1,389 housewives in poor communities through its Eco-Reach Program's Nanay Project, a livelihood initiative exclusively for stay-at-home mothers.

First launched in 2003, the Nanay Project lends an initial amount of P2,000 to a housewife who has an existing or proposed small business.

The enterprises range from selling soft

BUSINESSMEN/ A4

Widow is loving mom to 60 young offenders

By Christian V. Esguerra

CALL HIM MARK. NO ONE KNOWS HIS real age, and he doesn't either.

Judging by his build, his friends under the care of the Council for Children in Conflict with the Law in Marikina peg it at either 18 or 19.

He doesn't even know his real name.

Once he went by the name "Enteng." But that was before his parents brought him to a bus station in Pangasinan and left him there.

He was probably about 4 then. He never saw them again.

The parent Mark and about 60 other youth offenders have come to embrace is 55-year-old Nadela Sarte, a longtime television producer now working full-time for the kids as head of the council.

The Marikina government put up the council late last year to look after the welfare of children who have run afoul of the law. It helps keep them out of jail, where the company of much older inmates won't be good for their rehabilitation.

WIDOW/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/12/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Sunny	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Sunny	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Sunny	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Sunny	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

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GMA: Let's discern between good, evil

By Christine O. Avendaño, and
Vincent Cabreza, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

BAGUIO CITY—TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE people's reflective mood induced by the observance of Holy Week, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday appealed anew for unity and cooperation as she prodded Filipinos to use their faith in God to discern what is true and good.

And this includes telling the difference between those who have genuine intentions for the nation and those who don't, the President said.

Her chief of staff, Michael Defensor, was more direct, appealing to the opposition to refrain from politicking.

In her Lenten message, Ms Arroyo urged the people to heed God's call for everyone to instill love into all aspects of life.

She said it was the government's desire that the people had good jobs, safe streets, peace and an understanding of different religions, equal development among the regions and the capability to defend the country's freedom.

"Let us use our strong faith in God to discern between the truth and false promises, between good intentions and evil designs, between genuine harmony and actions that bring conflict to our people," Ms Arroyo said in Filipino.

Ms Arroyo and some members of the Cabinet were spending the Holy Week here, starting it off with a spiritual retreat.

"To politicians, we appeal them to stop politicking because they continue to do so to this day... Maybe it's time for us to think about what's good for Filipinos," Defensor said.

"Let's make work and what is needed to be done our priority, instead of engaging in politicking," he added.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said earlier that the Arroyo administration was eschewing politics during the week.

"Politics is not on the agenda of the Cabinet in retreat with President Arroyo and we are not about to hit back at our detractors," he said.

To prove his point, Bunye largely glossed over a recent survey by Ibon Foundation that showed the majority of Filipinos were dissatisfied with the President and opposed Charter change. He would have said much more at some other occasion. Nonetheless, he took a small swipe at the foundation, saying it "should be forgiven for its habitual biased surveys."

"Stop and listen" was the theme of the two-day retreat at the presidential Mansion here conducted by Lita Salinas, retreat master of the 16-year-old Contemplative Outreach Philippines Inc., the Philippine chapter of the Trappist movement, based in Makati City.

"We are too noisy we don't hear Him," Salinas said. "We have to learn to be quiet because in centering prayer, you don't talk and talk and talk and ask and ask and ask. [Centering prayer requires people to] simply be content with [being in] His presence and His divine action in your lives," she told reporters.

Reporters were allowed only three minutes to observe the session on Tuesday before they were asked to leave the Mansion.

But Ms Arroyo sat patiently for the session on Tuesday, which lasted from noon to about 8 p.m., said Salinas. She said yesterday's session was to run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. but Ms Arroyo cancelled the afternoon session to attend to other things.

"In the last two days, [the President] was convinced ... that it is useless for us to go about doing what we have to do every day if we are our [own] sin, let's call it that," Salinas told reporters.

"We are so limited as human beings, we can only do so much. We only have enough knowledge. No matter how brilliant we are, we don't know all the answers. We don't know where else to go—whether left, right, forward, backward," she said.

She said she told Ms Arroyo and her Cabinet that "we don't listen to God often enough" because "we do all the talking." *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

New Comelec official backs Charter change

By Jerome Aning

NEWLY APPOINTED ELECTION Commissioner Rene Sarmiento backs moves to amend or even revise the 1987 Constitution so that it can keep up with the challenges of the times.

"We have been faced with so many challenges and so many global developments and I think the Constitution has to address these difficult things. I think it is high time for the Constitution to face amendments or revisions," the former government peace negotiator said in his first press conference as a member of the Commission on Elections.

Sarmiento, a member of the constitutional commission that drafted the 1987 Charter, said being in favor of Charter change was his personal position and that he had been entertaining such views before his latest appointment.

Among the revisions Sarmiento supports are a shift to a federal system, the setting of more substantial qualifications for presidential candidates, and giving the Commission on Human Rights the power to prosecute.

Sarmiento also backs the electoral changes proposed by presidential adviser Hilario Davide Jr., such as prohibiting political dynasties and turncoatism, and extending the terms of congressional and local officials to four years.

He refused to comment on the signature drive for a people's initiative to change the Charter which the Arroyo administration is pushing.

"I have to very carefully study all the issues involved in this issue of initiative, [especially] their legal and constitutional questions. Pending my study of these questions, I beg your leave not to comment on this issue," he said.

"This is a raging issue in the country [so] I have to weigh the pros and the cons and the opinions of those for and against this system of initiative," he added.

Sarmiento drew a distinction between amending and revising a constitution.

"Amendments would be piecemeal changes [while] revisions would be radical changes in the Constitution," Sarmiento said.

Groups opposed to Cha-cha claimed the current people's initiative, which seeks a shift from the presidential to a parliamentary system, was a revision of the Constitution and could not be pursued via a people's initiative.

"I am honored and humbled by the appointment because of the bigness of the responsibility and I know this is a very sensitive and delicate responsibility ... We are the trustees of our people in ensuring that we have free and democratic and sovereign elections," he said of his appointment to the Comelec.

He admitted he had "some reservations" about his appointment and these pertained to the various controversies hounding the Comelec.

He said he accepted the post, adding: "If every Filipino refuses the chance to serve the government, what will happen to future generations?"

"I have no skeletons in the closet. I think my track record in public service will show that it was characterized by honesty and integrity and commitment to Article 11 of the Constitution on the accountability of public officers so I see no big problem in the Commission on Appointments," he said.

Sarmiento was previously deputy chief of the Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process with the rank of undersecretary. He was appointed in 1996 by President Fidel Ramos as a member of the government panel negotiating with the National Democratic Front and was later named the panel's vice chair.

LAST CALL FOR TAXPAYERS. Metro Manila residents file their income tax returns at a Bureau of Internal Revenue office in Quezon City on the last working day of the week yesterday. The deadline for filing ITRs has been extended until Monday, April 17.

REUTERS

Militants fight Cha-cha on buses

By Norman Bordadora

NO LENTEN HOLIDAY UNRUFFLED by politics apparently awaits the people.

Members of the militant group Sanlakas yesterday distributed flyers denouncing Charter change among thousands of commuters in Metro Manila's bus stations in a bid to counter plans by administration congressmen to promote the same with their constituencies.

Sanlakas hopes commuters will read the pamphlets while in transit and spread its arguments to their relatives over the holiday.

"Let us expect that there will be discussions among family members about the issues of Charter change," said Sanlakas officer Flora Santos, who is in charge of distributing the pamphlets.

"And in our culture, opinions of the working people who come from Manila carry a lot of weight among other family members."

Santos said more than a hundred pamphleteers had been deployed to different bus stations in Quezon City, Caloocan City, Manila and Pasay City.

She said the group also sent teams to traditional pilgrimage sites such as Antipolo, the Grotto in Bulacan and Mt. Banahaw in Quezon, where thousands of people flock in observance of Lent.

The pamphlet, titled "Sasakay ka ba sa tren ni Gloria?" (Are you going to ride on Gloria's train?), presents the group's analysis and position on moves to amend the Constitution.

Sanlakas believes that moves to amend the Constitution are part of the agenda of major proponents to stay in power. The pamphlet names the proponents as President Macapagal-Arroyo, Speaker Jose de Venecia, "and the rest of the traditional politicians who are fascinated by the proposal to shelve the 2007 elections."

"The power agenda is 2010 and beyond. Under the proposed amendments (Article VIII: Transitory Provisions) GMA will remain up to 2010 both as head of state and Chief Executive of the interim Parliament; JDV might be chosen the Prime Minister; while the rest of the incumbent lawmakers automatically become MPs and their terms, including those of LGU officials, will be extended to infinity and beyond," Sanlakas said in the leaflet.

Santos added: "And because the agenda is mainly about power, their method to achieve it is through manipulation, just like what Marcos did in forcing the approval of the 1973 Constitution."

BI says Bolante not in RP

THOUGH HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN sighted here, the Bureau of Immigration said that it had no record of former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante's return to the Philippines over the weekend.

BI regulation chief Edgardo Mendoza said yesterday a check of records at the bureau's offices at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and other ports, including those in Cebu, Davao, Clark, Laoag and Zamboanga, had come up empty on the name Bolante.

The bureau undertook the search to comply with the request of the office of Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., who said he had received a tip that the elusive ex-government official implicated in the alleged misuse of the P728-million fertilizer fund had been spotted outside his Ayala Alabang home.

Magsaysay heads the Senate committee on agriculture which is investigating the alleged fertilizer fund scam.

"We have no record of Mr. Bolante's arrival," Mendoza said. "Anyway, he couldn't have gone through the regular arrival process because we have been deputized by the Senate to bring Mr. Bolante to the upper chamber's sergeant-at-arms once he arrives."

The Senate issued a warrant for Bolante's arrest after the latter left the country for Hong Kong in December last year. It issued the warrant after citing Bolante in contempt and deputized the BI to arrest him once he passed through immigration.

The BI had placed Bolante on its watch list on Dec. 7, along with two other agriculture department officials also being investigated in connection with the use of the fertilizer funds. *Leila B. Salaverria and Philip C. Tubeza*

Suspected Abu blows self up making bomb

ZAMBOANGA CITY—AN ISLAMIC militant accidentally killed himself while building a bomb in the southern Philippines, the military said Wednesday.

The unnamed Abu Sayyaf suspect set off the bomb by mistake at his hideout near Maimbung on Jolo island Tuesday, said Brig. Gen. Alexander Aleo, head of a counter-terrorist task force based in this city.

Military ordnance experts were looking into the type of explosive in the Maimbung blast, as well as its intended target, Aleo told reporters.

Suspected Abu Sayyaf rebels bombed a Jolo commercial building on March 27, killing five people and wounding 17 others.

Also on Tuesday, government forces raided an Abu Sayyaf hideout near Zamboanga and killed a leading member of the group.

The Abu Sayyaf, thought to number some 500 militants, has been linked by US and Filipino intelligence officials to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden. It has been blamed for the worst terrorist attacks in the Philippines, including the fire-bombing of a passenger ferry on Manila Bay that claimed more than 100 lives, and the kidnappings of Western tourists that led to the deaths of two American captives in 2001 and 2002.

US Special Forces have deployed in the southern Philippines in recent years to train Filipino troops fighting the Abu Sayyaf.

A Singapore official, meanwhile, said on Wednesday the Mindanao region was the "weak link" in Southeast Asia's fight against terrorism, with militants still training there and arms and explosives being smuggled across its porous sea border. *AFP*

Banahaw no picnic site, pilgrims told

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCBAN, QUEZON—CHURCH people manning the Catholic pilgrimage site at the foot of Mt. Banahaw here have appealed to devotees expected to flock to the place this Holy Week to respect the sacred ground.

"Although the place is now considered a tourist spot, let us all avoid turning the site into just another picnic ground. The site is a sacred place for prayer and meditation. We should all keep it that way," said Dan Villenas, one of the lector-acolytes from the Kamay ni Hesus Ministry Foundation (KHMF).

Villenas, who is one of the original Church assistants of Catholic priest Fr. Joey Faller, said they expect thousands of pilgrims to visit the religious site during this week.

"The throng of devotees is an annual event. We have to maintain peace and order to keep the sacredness of the place," he said.

Faller, the charismatic "healer" and principal overseer of the religious complex, has been out of the country but is expected to return for Holy Week.

Fr. Angelo Jaballa is now the acting spiritual head of the healing Church.

In an interview last year, Faller had raised concerns about the prospect of the "sacred place" being turned into another regular destination of picnickers and the just plain curious.

"The sight of the multitudes flocking here was a vision come true. God had invited them, some through the media, and they all came. But please, don't turn the place into just another excursionist site for plain curiosity. Give the place the respect that it deserves. The healing center is holy ground," Faller had said.

He reminded all visitors to come with "renewed spirit, renewed hearth and intense hope that the Lord will touch them with all His healing power."

"They should not be motivated by curiosity alone," he said.

Rain or shine during Holy Week, people from all walks of life troop to the pilgrimage site located at Barangay Tinamnan, some two kilometers from the town proper, to visit the "Via Dolorosa, the Grotto of Healing and Purification" carved out of an adjacent hill.

The hill has been transformed into a virtual "stairway to heaven" with monumental Stations of the Cross strategically spread out along the pathways with the grotto of the Virgin Mary at the center.

A devotee must endure the physically exhausting 292-step concrete steps on the left ascent, and 278 steps if one climbs on the right with only a piece of rope to cling to in order to reach the 50-foot concrete icon of the resurrected Christ at the summit.

With the continuous influx of thousands of visitors, the KHMF is trying to reverse the ill effects on the sacredness of the place.

It has imposed disciplinary measures to be observed around the premises.

Smoking and eating in the immediate vicinity of the sacred ground is prohibited.

There is now a dress code for visitors, disallowing entry of those wearing inappropriate clothes.

The parking lot in the Church compound is now free of the vendors that used to sell food and assorted curio.

The only store in the compound is the Church-owned souvenir shop that sells candles and religious items.

Meanwhile, Department of Environment and Natural Resources officials and a volunteer environmentalist group said they were dismayed by the intransigence of pilgrims and mountaineers who insist on entering the prohibited area on Mt. Banahaw.

Jay Lim, program director of Tanggol Kalikasan, a public interest environmental legal defense center, said elements of the Philippine Army and volunteer mountain watchdogs were searching for seven mountaineers who sneaked onto the mountain early Wednesday morning.

Lim said that based on information gathered, the fully equipped mountaineers were determined to reach the summit.

Traders seek experts' help to check peso appreciation

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION of local exporters called on the country's top economists to find ways to help stabilize the peso-dollar exchange rate which continues to hover at a level critical to the survival of their businesses.

Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr., president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation (Philexport), asked the Philippine Economic Society "to find the levers that can be pulled" to save the exporters.

Ortiz-Luis cited an analysis in the international magazine The Economist that warned of the dangers of appreciating Southeast Asian currencies, which pose threats to the export-dependent economies in the region.

"Present global trade and cash flow realities may require that those levers be used in more ways than just reining in inflation and defending the peso from speculative attacks," he said.

"We need an exchange rate that balances the requirements of government and business, of dollar earners and local consumers," he said, adding that a rate near the P51:$1 level means losses for exporters.

Further, Ortiz-Luis said, the exporters need an exchange rate that would maintain the competitiveness of the nation's goods, services, human and natural resources, and financial instruments.

The Philexport chief reiterated calls by the group for the government to "adjust economic policies to balance the interests of other segments of the economy with the survival of the exporters and the families that depend on the export industries."

Infrastructure projects

The group had also called for Malacañang, the Bangko Sentral and Congress to set in place policy and institutional reforms, and roll out the infrastructure support projects earlier committed to to avert reversals, if not the collapse of the two strongest pillars of the economy."

Philexport said the appreciation of the peso had an adverse effect on some 8 million direct and indirect workers in the different export industries—the food sector which has 3.5 million workers, marine products with 1.32 million workers; furniture with one million; handicrafts with 700,000; resource-based industries including mining 650,000; the electronics industry 476,000; garments 223,000, and information and communication technology-based services 150,000.

"That part of the economy that earns foreign exchange, including exports, overseas Filipino workers and export service providers, easily contributes more than half of the Philippine economy," Ortiz-Luis said.

"We wonder how maintaining a strong peso that undermines the viability of the two most productive pillars of the economy—exports and overseas workers—is good for the country," he said.

Interest rate hike

Meanwhile, Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco said on Tuesday an interest rate hike in 2006 could not be ruled out if inflation flared in the Philippines and other countries kept raising their rates.

"Looking at what is happening globally, there is a general tightening of monetary policy," he told reporters in a briefing in New York.

The Philippines would need to be vigilant about "a possible portfolio shift if dollar assets become more attractive than peso assets... which means we cannot really rule out a rate hike for the remainder of the year."

Philippine overnight rates stand at 7.5 percent for borrowing and 9.75 percent for lending, the highest level in more than four years.

Wait and see

"If the US continues (rate increases) and the ECB (European Central Bank) raises and Japan (goes up), we will have to see," he said. "We will also have to look at the inflation outlook."

Philippine annual inflation in March stood at 7.6 percent, unchanged from the preceding month.

Analysts have expressed fears the country could see inflation spike if crude prices surge during the peak northern hemisphere summer consumption period.

The May crude contract on the New York Mercantile Exchange climbed $1.36 on Tuesday to end at $68.80 per barrel due to worries over supply disruptions over Iran's nuclear ambitions and unrest in Nigeria.

"The central bank is not going to let inflation get out of hand (in the Philippines)," Tetangco said.

With a Reuters report

Arroyo camp ridicules Erap plan to run in snap election

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Nelson F. Flores and Michael Lim Ubac

FIRST GENTLEMAN JOSE Miguel Arroyo yesterday called former President Joseph Estrada a hypocrite who was salivating for a second term in Malacañang with his talk of leading the opposition in a snap presidential election.

Arroyo said he would include Estrada in his prayers so that his wife's bitter political rival would realize that the Constitution bars a president from running for a second term and that not all of the opposition look up to him as a "unifying leader."

"We pity Mr. Estrada that he continues to salivate for the presidency and seems to have forgotten or is deliberately ignoring the truth that the Constitution limits him to a single term as President," Arroyo said in a statement released by Malacañang.

Arroyo said Estrada should read the Constitution again before declaring his plans in the event of a snap election because "even calling for a snap election is unconstitutional."

Apparently buoyed by Estrada's continued popularity among the masses despite five years in detention, former Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen said Tuesday that Estrada was a viable alternative to President MacapagalArroyo, that he could lead the fragmented opposition to victory in an election, and that people power was the best way to bring Estrada back to power.

"It is even more pathetic that Mr. Estrada has not learned to accept the fact that the opposition no longer looks up to him as a unifying leader as evidenced by the refusal of Sen. Panfilo Lacson and the late Fernando Poe Jr. to yield to each other in the last elections," Arroyo said.

At a news conference last Tuesday, Dilangalen insisted that Estrada was still the legitimate head of state.

"If only to prove that the Filipino people really love him and want radical change in government, he might run in a snap election," Dilangalen said, adding that Estrada was a unifying factor for the opposition and its most viable candidate in a special election.

Last Monday, Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano and party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva of the Citizens Battle Against Corruption called on the President to call for a snap election.

Cayetano said that if she won in the polls, which could be held in 45 to 60 days, "then she solves the legitimacy issue" hounding her presidency following the "Hello Garci" scandal.

To remove all legal obstacles, Vice President Noli de Castro should also step down and run for President if he wanted to, said Villanueva.

Told that the holding of a snap election was not explicitly written in the 1987 Constitution, Cayetano said: "Then Ms Arroyo and her allies should use Charter change to introduce one single amendment—the calling of a snap election."

BI tops collection target by 31%

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION yesterday reported that it had surpassed its collection target for the first quarter of the year by nearly 31 percent despite the dual citizenship law that removed former Filipinos from its jurisdiction.

The BI earned P375.59 million from January to March, or P88.59 million more than its P287-million target.

The amount was P42 million, or over 12 percent, higher than its earnings in the same period last year, BI Commissioner Alipio Fernandez said.

"We are confident that we will be able to duplicate, if not surpass, the all-time high income that we registered in 2005," Fernandez said in a statement.

The BI's income last year totaled P1.3 billion. The bureau aims to collect P1.12 billion in 2006.

Fernandez attributed the increase in the bureau's income to the continued arrival of foreigners, saying that this indicated that tourists and investors were not affected by negative reports about the situation in the country.

The bureau's earnings come from approving visa applications of aliens applying for resident and immigrant status in the country and visa extension fees. It also collects revenue from fines and penalties imposed on overstaying and deported aliens.

The BI's biggest collection in the first quarter of 2006 was recorded in January, when it earned P135.59 million, according to immigration finance chief Elvira Presado. This was followed by the P126.9 million February collection and the P113.1 million March collection

Presado said the bureau's surplus earnings constituted a significant development considering that its income would likely have been higher were it not for the dual citizenship law.

She said that because of the law, former Filipinos who had become naturalized citizens of other countries were able to regain their Philippine citizenship, thus removing them from under the bureau's jurisdiction.

"Before the dual citizenship law was passed, these balikbayans were a prime source of revenue as they had to pay fees whenever they extended their visas or applied for immigrant visas," she said.

Earlier, the BI said it had approved some 12,000 applications for dual citizenship by the end of 2005. The Dual Citizenship Law was enacted in 2004.

Lansang, poet, dies; 66

POET JOSE MANUEL LANSANG JR. passed away on April 11 at the age of 66. Lansang won the Palanca Award for Poetry in 1970. He authored books of poetry, at times using the nom de plume Atariq. He is survived by his mother Flora Celi-Lansang, brothers Teodoro, Leonardo and Claro, sisters Nina Joaquin and Risa Reyes, nephews and nieces. His remains lie at Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

Justice Puno's wife passes away

SUPREME COURT SENIOR ASSOCIATE JUStice Reynato Puno's wife, former Clerk of Court Luzviminda Delgado Puno, died yesterday at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City due to complications following heart surgery. She was 66.

She had retired on June 23 as clerk of the Supreme Court.

Apart from Justice Puno, she is survived by her children and in-laws, namely, Reynato Jr. and Cheryl Mae Yap, Emmanuel and Rachelle Catherine Fabreo, and Ruth, and grandchildren Alessandra Isabelle, Leticia Raquelle and Elijah Ray.

The wake is at the Heritage Park chapel on Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Internment will be at noon on April 16.

As a result of her death, the flags at the Supreme Court offices in Manila and Baguio have been lowered to half staff.

Puno graduated cum laude in 1961 from the University of the East College of Law and passed the bar exams the same year.

As clerk of the Supreme Court, she held the rank of presiding justice of the Court of Appeals. She chaired, among other offices, the Supreme Court's promotions board and its health and welfare committee and was secretary of the Judiciary and Bar Council.

She was also a lay leader of the United Methodist Church.

"In her 12 years as Clerk of Court, Mrs. Puno not only ably assisted the Supreme Court in the discharge of its judicial functions, but also held significant posts in various committees of the High Court," said a statement issued by the court's information office.

"I deeply mourn the passing of attorney Puno. She was a role model for public servants, especially in the sensitive position she held as a career official in the judiciary," said Sen. Joker Arroyo in a statement.

Armand N. Nocum

Nation marks 58th death anniversary of Manuel Roxas

THE COUNTRY COMMEMORATES ON APRIL 15 the 58th death anniversary of Manuel Acuña Roxas, the last President of the Commonwealth government and the first of the Philippine Republic.

In his memory, the President Manuel Roxas Memorial Center, a historical and educational institution commemorating the evolution of Philippine democracy and the country's reconstruction after World War II, will be constructed. The center will rise on Roxas Boulevard under the aegis of the President Manuel A. Roxas Foundation, the National Historical Institute and the Manila city government.

This year's commemoration will include memorial Masses in selected churches and wreath-laying rites at Roxas' tomb at the North Cemetery, at Clark Field in Pampanga where he died on April 15, 1948, and in Roxas City which was named after him.

Roxas was born in Capiz (now Roxas City), Capiz, on Jan. 1, 1892, to Gerardo Roxas and Rosario Acuña. His father died after being shot by Spanish *guardia civil* (civil guards) seven months before he was born.

Roxas received his basic education in public schools in Capiz and Manila, graduating in 1909 with highest honors from Manila High School (now Araullo High School).

In 1913, he graduated valedictorian of his law class at the University of the Philippines, where he was the class and student council president. That same year, he topped the first-ever bar exams with a grade of 92 percent.

Roxas's public career began in 1917 when he was appointed to the municipal council of Capiz. In 1919, he was elected governor of Capiz, the youngest provincial chief executive then at the age of 27. In 1922, he became congressman of the first district of Capiz and for 12 consecutive years was the Speaker of the House.

One of his greatest achievements was the enactment of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Law in 1932 which paved the way for the Tydings-McDuffie Act that led to the granting of independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946. Roxas was a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1934-35 and was one of the "Seven Wise Men" who drafted the Charter.

When World War II broke out, Roxas enlisted in the military service and was given the rank of lieutenant colonel in the United States Armed Forces in the Far East and became an aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur. He was promoted to brigadier general and was responsible for bringing food from his province to feed over 20,000 soldiers and civilians on Corregidor.

After the war, Roxas ran for president against the incumbent Sergio Osmeña. He won the election and inherited a nation in ruins after the war.

To him was attributed the first Master Economic Plan, the first known in developing Asia at the time, which spurred the country's return to normalcy and growth.

M LHUILLIER

CASH PABUENAS
RAFFLE PROMO

GRAND DRAW WINNERS
of ₱250,000.00 each
April 3, 2006

LUZON
FLORIDA M. ELEFASE
ASPI Trading, SJ Baltan St., PPC

NCR
ADRFO C. REFUERZO
Villman Computer 158 West Ave., Quezon City

VISAYAS
MARIE GRACE O. GERONIMO
Dawis Brgy 14 Bacolod City

MINDANAO
VILMA VEQUIZE
AGR Pharmacy Mercado St., Iligan City

3rd MONTHLY RAFFLE DRAW WINNERS OF P2,000.00 EACH, April 3, 2006

AREAS	NAMES & ADDRESSES
	NCR / LUZON
NCR Central A	FEDERICO B. MAHINAY JR. 6120 JP rizal St., Sto. Nino Area D Cam. Caloocan City
NCR Central B	MARCOS B. PEREZ, V Serano St., Tondo, Manila
NCR Rizal A	SHERYL PEREYE MARINO, Blk 11 Lot 123 Eastwind Homes, Mont. Rizal
NCR Rizal B	FELICIDAD T. VALERIO, 1085 Bautista St., Calumpang Binangonan Rizal
NCR Cavite A	VICTORIO S. MONTE JR., Blk 23 Lot 5 City Homes Resortville Subd., Dasmarinas Cavite
NCR Cavite B	SONNY DELA CRUZ, Blk 1 Lot 10 AEM Paramount Homes Brgy. Navarro Gen Trias Cavite
NCR Cavite C	JANETH ALGABRE, 184 DSM Subd. Mambog, BC
Southern Luzon A	NIMFA L. ESPERANCILLA, Blk 27 L5 Sibo Pag-asa Brgy UB San Pedro Laguna
Southern Luzon B	GRACE A. ESTANDARTE, B25 L10 Tran St., San Marino Central Salawag, Dasma. Cavite
Southern Luzon C	DANTE DE GALA, Konca #160 B2 L3 San Gabriel St., GMA Cavite City
S/E Luzon A	EPETACIA R. DECHAVEZ, 2-B Int. Avenida Rizal St., Lucban Quezon
S/E Luzon B	JOHN POWELL DE LORIA, 11552 Mayondon Los Baños Laguna
S/W Luzon A	MARK ANTHONY R. NAPA, M. Cabrera St., Wawa Ibaba Lemery Batangas
S/W Luzon B	ALONA C. FONTANILLA, 134D Carandang St., Rosario Batangas
S/W Luzon C	JEAN P. DELA CRUZ, 22CRU, 2CRG, CRSAFP CP Aguinaldo Quezon City
Bicol A	JULITO BAYRON, 1418 Purok 5 Naga Puerto Cagayan de Oro City
Bicol B	CELSO C. CEPRIASO, 380 Sta. Cruz Proper (along P. Santos St.) Naga City
Bicol C	HONORIA GELILIO, 10th St., OLV Pang-Pang Sorsogon City
Central Luzon A	JERRY JAVIER, 28 Taipapa St., Pasig Candaba Pampanga
Central Luzon B	LEANDRO DE CASTRO, 269, Sn. Isidro Mac Pampanga
Central Luzon C	TERESITA EDODO LEON, # 26A 14 St., E. Tapinac Olongapo City
Northern Luzon A	CONSTANTE PALIMA JR., #33 Cabulalaan, Bacarra, Ilocos Norte
Northern Luzon B	MARY ANN M. PREZA, 73 Mena Crisologo St., Vigan City, Ilocos Sur
N/W Luzon A	JOSIELYN R. MAGALLON, #08 Maryhurst Rd., Outlook Drive, Brgy. Lucnab, Baguio City
N/W Luzon B	JAKE N. MENDOZA, #4 Rosario, Pozor Rubio, Pangasinan
N/W Luzon C	MERLITA BAUTISTA, 48 Macayug Mangaldan, Pangasinan
N/E Luzon A	RENATO FAJARDO, 284 Carmen, Zaragosa NE
N/E Luzon B	MYRADEL U. YALUNG, 0049 Brgy. Maliwalo Market View, Tug. City
N/E Luzon C	LANIE B. SIBAL, 35 Sonono St., Don Domingo, Tuguegarao City
Palawan	REMEDIOS CUYOS, Brgy I, Tandol Roxas, Palawan
	VISAYAS-MINDANAO
Cebu South A	Felix Moncada Jr., Panagunan, Dalaguete, Cebu
Cebu South B	Avelina R. Capuyan, Poblacion Alcantara Cebu
Cebu South C	Emma Castillo, Poblacion Ronda Cebu
Cebu Central A	Julieta Carasco, 215 Spolarium St., Duljo Cebu City
Cebu Central B	Damiano Abayon, Quiyaw Compd, Calamba, V.Rama
Cebu Central C	Miriam Rivera, 100 E Logarta St., Cebu City
Cebu North A	Josephine Lamoste, Rizal St., Danao City Cebu
Cebu North B	Grace Abino, Lower Sampaguita, Banilad, Cebu City
Cebu North C	Estela Contridas, A-32 IPI Housing Talamban
Cebu North D	Teonila Quimbo, Cogon, Compostela Cebu
Bohol	Rolaida D. Parafos, Nova Beach Resort Tawala, Panglao, Bohol
Negros Oriental/Siquijor	Analisa Carimat, Tanjay City, Negros Oriental
Negros Occidental A	Rolyn Mapas, Brgy II, Negros Occidental
Negros Occidental B	Amy Nain, Candelaria Central Manapla Neg Occ.
Negros Occidental C	Jereson Mesplaguera, Avancena St., Pob1, Sagay City, Neg.Occ.
Panay/Romblon A	Nievec Sullisas, Bakhaw, Jaro Iloilo
Panay/ Romblon B	Myla Melodias, 422 A.Lopez Jaena St., Iloilo City
Panay/Romblon C	Alfredo B. Espinosa, Nueva Valencia Brgy Poblacion, Guimaras
Panay/ Romblon D	Roger Barbas Sr., Busco, Quezon BUK Zone IV
Panay/Romblon E	Mary Joy Tiso, Brgy. Tingban Carles Iloilo City
Leyte/Samar A	Filda Orbeta, Brgy. Layo, Basey, Samar
Leyte/Samar B	Gilda Loyola R., Washington St., Palompon Leyte
Leyte/Samar C	Melinda L. Capote, Tambis 1 St., St.Bernard, Southern Leyte
Leyte/Samar D	Lydia Uy Aliman, Gandara Samar
Ozamis Pagadian A	Analiza Abarco, P-3 Bagakay, Ozamis City
Ozamis/ Pagadian B	Vivian Munoz, Funeraria Celenon
Socsksargen A	Myline Liupar, Bo 2 Koronadal City
Socsksargen B	Yolanda Flores, Glan Sarangani Province
Socsksargen C	Jane Mictat, Kabacan Cotobato
Davao A	Welmer Veranda, Brgy 22-C Papi Blvd. Davao City
Davao B	Rita Rivera, 773-I P Reyes St. Davao City
Davao C	Casiano Edhao Jr., Bermudez Plains Apokon Tagum City
Misamis Oriental/Bukidnon	Emma Else, Clarin Misamis Occidental
Iligan City/Misamis Oriental	Denbert Tingcang, Purok 21 pob. Manticao Misamis Oriental
Caraga A	Elsie Amargo, Purok 2 Bagong Silang Washington Surigao DN
Caraga B	Liezel Murillo, Mangagoy Bislig City
Caraga C	Gemma M. Bernal, Mapaso, Magsaysay, Placer Surigao DN
Cagayan de Oro	Margie G. Bacud, Zone 5 Bonbon Cagayan de Oro City
Lanao del Norte	Astrid Rosa Limbungan, Purok Tuburan Pob. Aurora
Dipolog/Zamboanga/Sibugay A	Aubrey Javarilla, Kauswagan Plandel Mis. Occ
Dipolog/Zamboanga/Sibugay B	Roman de Lunad, Lacaya St. Dipolog City
Zamboanga/Basilan Tawi-Tawi A	Pelsi C. Bando, Erean Compd Sta. Maria Zamboanga City
Zamboanga/Basilan/TawiTawi B	Lucean L. Jimenez, 590 Casuda Zamboanga City

Per DTI NCR Permit # [illegible] series of 2005

M LHUILLIER
"NUMERO UNO NG BAYAN
QUICK CASH LOANS

Businessmen's solomonic wisdom lends to 'Nanay'

From page A1

drinks and siopao and puto to vending "banana-cue," offering manicure and pedicure services, and running sari-sari stores and *bigasan*, vegetable or fruit stalls.

Only those whose husbands are working and have a family income of less than P10,000 monthly are eligible to borrow money. The loan must be paid in 25 weeks, after which they can borrow again up to P10,000.

"We saw that by helping them, we do not only give them livelihoods but self-respect," Louie Morales, owner of a Makati-based advertising agency and a past national chair of the BCBP, told the Inquirer.

The Nanay Project was patterned after the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, which was put up to help housewives start or expand their businesses to augment their meager family incomes.

During its birthing stage, a local bank told the BCBP that the Nanay Project would simply not survive as it was not profit-oriented. The BCBP needed to make money from it to get the project rolling, the bank said.

Bank proved wrong

The booming businesses of some 1,300 housewives and a steady stream of donors three years later have proven that bank wrong.

"The directors do not receive dividends, and the donors don't see it as an investment but something that's voluntary, a form of assistance," Morales said.

He said the housewives in poor households regain their sense of dignity and importance when they feel that they are doing more for the family than cleaning the house, feeding their children and waiting for their husbands to hand in their measly earnings.

Cecilia Ojeno, 35, of Sitio Pag-Asa in Parañaque, literally started from scratch.

Her husband, a garbage collector in the nearby villages, earns only P20 per sack of trash that he collects and cannot support their five children, four of whom are in school.

Training the housewives

Hearing of the Nanay Project through a daycare teacher, Ojeno decided to join the five-day training for housewives, where they were oriented not only on the terms of the loan but on the Christian values that should govern their endeavors.

"Every meeting we recite a pledge to pray, send our children to school, repay our loans, conduct business honestly," Ojeno said in Filipino. It was a commitment she has faithfully kept.

Ojeno goes around in a *padyak* (an improvised bicycle) to collect loose metal, bottles, aluminum cans, old air-conditioners and refrigerators, which she sells to a junk shop.

She earns as much as P700 a day. From her daily rounds, she has made some loyal customers in the vicinity, including people from the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and another nearby big company, who bring their junk to Ojeno's little junkyard at home.

Taking a risk

"I used to be so scared of borrowing money because I might not be able to repay it," said housewife Evelyn Trinidad who, with five children, could hardly make ends meet despite the income of her OFW husband. "I never borrowed from anyone even when my kids were going hungry."

In October 2003, Trinidad, 44, decided to take a risk with the Nanay Project. She got P2,000, bought five cases of soft drinks and beer, and easily sold these to her neighbors.

The loan fully paid months later, she borrowed again and branched out into making siopao and puto, and ice and ice candy, of which she sells up to 130 pieces a day.

Trinidad's puto, a favorite in parties in the neighborhood, have reached as far as Bicol through orders made by friends and her daughter's officemates. She wants to be a soft drinks dealer this year.

P10-M loan portfolio

The Eco-Reach's loan portfolio for the Nanay Project is expected to reach P10 million this year with a target 3,000 beneficiaries in their 60 loan centers all over the country.

"We want to live out our faith. What good is being a Christian if you don't do anything?" BCBP executive director Joji de Rivera, a former banker, said.

With businessmen practicing the advice of him whom the Bible describes as the richest king in history, the Lord may indeed find Himself with a long list of payables sometime soon.

Widow is loving mom to 60 young offenders

From page A1

Involvement in the advocacy is neither an act of penitence nor mortification for Nadela, a widow with two children. It's more about seeing the suffering face of Christ in these young souls society has come to dismiss as hopeless juvenile delinquents.

"No, they're not," she protests when the Inquirer visited the place in Barangay Sta. Elena last Monday. "Just give them a home and love and they'll become productive citizens."

Easier said than done, but Nadela is driven by experience. She is no neophyte with kids, having been a producer of the defunct TV educational program "Chikiting Patrol."

Since last February, she has opened the doors of her late husband's high-walled, 400-square-meter property along C. Cruz to the likes of Mark. She keeps them there while they await their "release on recognizance."

Jail life

She began with 22 youth offenders and is now left with 10. The rest had been released on ROR or, unhappily for some, convicted of offenses for which they had been arrested.

Nadela was introduced to jail life when a friend invited her to see some 35 youth offenders at the Marikina jail in October 2004. She was later asked to lead a program to keep them distracted from the dark conditions behind bars.

Reluctant, she says she was challenged when she overheard one young inmate say: "We've got someone new again. Let's see how long this one will last."

"Good thing there are poor people like us in this world," another one said. "We help keep the rich busy. And we bring them to heaven."

Crayons and Bibles

For the following Mondays without fail, Nadela would visit the group, bringing with her crayons and sketch pads, Bibles and crucifixes. Soon they were drawing and praying, and opening up to the stranger.

Their works were predominantly about prison life and their experiences in the streets. One drew a witch. He said it was his mother who had abandoned him.

The diligence paid off.

Life in tattoos

The youth offenders, guided by freelance artist Dennis Miguel, came up with an exhibit of their own in late 2004. A bigger exhibit is set at the GSIS Building on April 17.

At Nadela's house, the boys' sorry past are written all over their scarred bodies, lean frames used as tattoo canvases during their stint at the city jail. Many of them sport colorful hair, giving them the look of someone you would never want to meet in a dark alley.

But their looks betray them—they're no hardened criminals. Their crimes, at least insofar as some are concerned, range from simple theft to cell phone snatching. Mark was jailed for stealing scrap metal.

One of them was charged with frustrated homicide for his role in a rumble.

She doesn't scare easy

Still, they're not the type who would scare Nadela away. To think that she has a pretty daughter, 22-year-old Flexi, living with her.

"I eat with them, I sleep with them. But never did I lose anything and not once did they threaten me or anything," the mother says.

If anything, it's her neighbors who are uneasy. They fear it's just a matter of time before they see a violent jailbreak or a bloody hostage drama in the Sarte household.

Only a lone guard stationed at the gate by the local government keeps watch over the boys as a matter of procedure.

Honesty and discipline

Nadela understands her neighbors' anxiety. If only they would drop by her house and see for themselves how the teenagers are doing, she's certain their fears would be allayed.

She has realized, for instance, that there is no problem with honesty and discipline.

To keep the boys busy, she came up with a daily schedule that allotted time for prayers, exercise, and creative and household work. It's unlike in a city jail or military dormitory, where actions are numbered. One digression means punishment.

Alternating at kitchen work on a weekly basis is a necessity considering that Nadela, a single parent since her husband Chito died in 2002, can't cook for them all the time.

Mutual love

During the Inquirer visit, Jasper, 18, was manning the kitchen, making sure that every one was getting his fair share of meatloaf and rice. Later, Mark washed the plates.

Traces of his Japanese father are in the eyes of Jasper. He has never seen him. He hasn't seen his Filipino mother for quite sometime, as well.

"That's the way things go here," Nadela says. "Even if I'm out, they know what to do. They cook their food and clean up afterward."

In their few months together, the boys have come to regard her as a doting mother. And they have been reciprocating.

John Paul, 13, finds no difficulty sitting in her lap or showering her with hugs and kisses.

Life with meaning

A cherubic boy, he is easily much cuter than your average talent search contestant or child actor.

His father is in Pampanga and his mother now has a family of her own.

John Paul was begging for Christmas alms under the Katipunan Bridge when cops took him in instead of the snatcher they were running after last December.

Nadela is convinced John Paul and the rest of the group will go places if only someone would look after them. To her mind, breaking a simple city ordinance and then spending years in jail for it isn't the way any kid should go.

"They have to realize that their life should have meaning," she says.

Picking up the pieces

Seven of her former wards are now picking up the pieces. Three of them are employed as gas boys, two as conductors and one as a dishwasher. The last one is back with his family, bringing home with him the same atmosphere of order and discipline he learned from Nadela.

Mark, once described as "tungaw" for his perennial silence, is now showing signs of an active life. He has been repairing electric fans and radios or whatever he can get his hands on in the house.

Last month, former housemate Hamsa, 21, paid a surprise visit.

First paycheck

An attendant earning P200 daily at a gas station in Bayan-Bayanan, Hamsa was eager to give his "mother" Nadela his first paycheck.

"Please take it. It's the first time that I got a real and decent pay," the excited Hamsa told her.

Touched, Nadela refused the money. But she asked him to buy bath soap and toothpaste for the boys left behind.

She knows that they, too, will pass on the same act of kindness and gratitude to those who will be coming after them.

Judas phallic rites symbol of protest begun in Antique

From page A1

sticking out of one shoe is lighted, and he explodes in a burst of firecrackers while a band of drunken musicians plays a cacophonous version of "Aloha Oe."

The effigy is consumed by the fire but the phallus, carved out of moist, fresh wood, drops unscathed to the ground, and there is a mad scramble among the boys for the prized symbol.

Barrio San Pedro of Antique

Antique is the most impoverished province on Panay island. It is the source of migrant workers, especially of the *sacadas*, who are seasonal workers for the sugarcane plantations in the nearby island of Negros. Whereas Negros is known as the "Sugar Bowl of the Philippines," Antique is the "Home of the Sacadas."

Major source of OFWs

Recently, with the decline of the Philippine sugar industry, Antique has become the country's major source of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), or as they call themselves, "glorified sacadas." (The word sacada literally means 'taken', hence 'recruited.') Because of this, they also call themselves *layas* Antiqueños "Antiqueño vagabonds" or "runaway Antiqueños."

Evelio Javier killed here

The setting of the Judas ritual is Barrio San Pedro, off the capital town of San Jose de Buenavista. This town's plaza is famous in its own right for having been the site of former Gov. Evelio Javier's assassination in January 1986. As the sacadas of Negros, the Antiqueños are also imprinted in the Filipino consciousness as the icons of poverty, exploitation and oppression, especially at the height of the martial law period in the 1970s and '80s.

Signboards in San Jose—like this name of a small carinderia, "Stomach Development"—recall the years when it was the beneficiary of funding agencies. Today the meaning of "layas Antiqueño" extends to the contemporary phenomenon of global diaspora.

The present population of San Pedro is difficult to pin down because of its migrant nature. The 2000 census records it at 5,000. But for a small community it has a disproportionately large number of religious sects—seven in all: Catholic, Philippine Independent (or Iglesia Independyente), Iglesia ni Kristo, Baptist, Evangelist, Jehovah's Witnesses and 7th Day Adventist. The population, however, is predominantly Catholic.

History of Judas ritual

There was a time when the Philippine Independent Church, founded by Gregorio Aglipay, was the dominant religion in many towns and barrios of Antique and other Visayan islands. The Judas ritual began shortly after the Philippine Independent Church was established in Barrio San Pedro in 1903, although the elders say that this ritual has been held "ever since they can remember" and even before they were born.

Not Catholic rite

Fr. Glicerio Geremia, director of the St. Peter's Seminary in this barrio, firmly disowns it as a Catholic rite and claims that it is affiliated with the Independent Church. "Shenanigans" is how another priest dismisses it.

To be sure, the Judas ritual, which ends with the hanging and burning of his effigy, is not unique to Antique. It is also held in several other provinces all over the country, such as in Ilocos, Laguna, Bulacan, and other parts of Panay. In these other places, the ritual is definitely organized by the Independents.

Unique to Antique

But what is unique to the Judas ritual of Barangay San Pedro is the giant phallus that is attached to his effigy.

The parade begins simultaneously with the Catholic Mass on the eve of Easter Sunday. It makes the rounds of the barrio, going from street to street, and pauses in front of the Catholic church. Here, Judas and his entourage wait for the Mass to end.

The elders blithely recall that, in times past, the end of the Mass signaled the start of exuberant, even rambunctious, activities. As the Catholics emerged from the church, the Judas paraders pursued the single women, old or young, with Judas and his bouncing phallus. This was the one day of the year when the prim and proper churchwomen could shriek, figuratively let their hair down, and still be consistent with their desire to preserve their virtue.

The parade would end at the plaza, where the people took turns chanting the *"panangis"* (lamentation) and dancing the curacha. The passages of lamentation were taken from that chapter of the *pasyon* that accused Judas not only of treachery but also of being the product of that most heinous of sexual perversions, incest. For example, this stanza from Gaspar Aquino de Belen's *pasyon* (in English translation): "For the lineage from which he sprung was lustful, whose stain had no equal; for he sprung from the sin of incest."

Someone then lighted the fuse sticking out of Judas's shoes and he exploded in a burst of firecrackers while he was hanged by the neck with an abaca noose.

Loudest blast

The firecrackers were stuffed inside the effigy, along with flammable materials of rice straw and abaca cloth. His head, being the biggest part of the effigy, took the longest to explode because it was stuffed with the largest and most numerous firecrackers. But the loudest blast occurred in his testicles, which were also disproportionately large so as to hold the strongest explosives.

The ritual was also a contest for the best *panangis* chanter, the best curacha dancer and—because there used to be as many as 10 Judases—the best effigy.

The town artist Nonoy Galdo Escarlan, significantly an Independent, now deceased, acquired a reputation for designing the best-looking effigy and most impressive carving of the phallus.

The prizes were purchased with money collected from the barrio people, whose income derived from fishing, small-scale rice planting, muscovado "brown sugar" milling. The effigy, too, was a product of communal activity.

Aside from the barrio people who contributed the money for the firecrackers, some were designated as the rice-straw gatherers (*tagahakot sang uhut*) and the abaca-cloth sewers (*tagatahi sang sinamay*), which were used for the stuffing.

No longer original

Disappointingly, the ritual as it is held now has hardly anything left of the original form. On Black Saturday of 2002, which was when I witnessed it, there was only one Judas, with a disproportionately small phallus and a regular-sized head. The testicles were a pair of guavas wrapped in a piece of ladies' stocking and hung from the phallus with a wire. These were not stuffed with firecrackers and were meant to drop to the ground with the phallus when the burning of the effigy was over. The explosions hardly lasted five minutes.

Fortunately, however, the high point of the ritual remained that day. Everything of Judas was completely consumed by the fire, except his phallus, which was carved out of fresh wood. It dropped to the ground, and anyone who wanted to would have been allowed to pick it up and keep it for themselves. Above the din of explosions and the many-layered rendering of "Aloha Oe," there was the solitary voice of an elderly woman chanting the *panangis*.

The barrio ombudsman explained that the phallus was made smaller that year because the youth and children might no longer perceive it as innocently as before. In spite of the lack of the urban amenities in Antique, media, especially cable TV, DVD, and the Internet have invaded the region. In effect, globalization has penetrated the consciousness of the people of San Pedro and eroded their traditions. Antique is particularly vulnerable to this because of its status as an OFW province.

Such is the magical realist life of postmodern Philippines, where a globalized village named after San Pedro (for whom the cock crowed three times) strangely ignores its patron saint in favor of that despicable traitor, Judas and his marvelous but silent sex organ!

Phallic power

But why, we may ask, does this ritual, which focuses on the theme of Judas's treachery, revolve around his phallus?

The revolution against Spain was necessarily anticlerical. When Independents mocked the Catholics outside the church during Mass, they were in effect giving the Catholics the third finger, or synonymously, the accusing finger. This was not only a religious statement but a political one as well. The Independents were waving a symbol of nationalism in defiance of that structure of Spanish oppression—the Catholic Church.

Symbol of protest

Hence, if nothing of the effigy survives except the phallus—which the Spanish friars preached as being that "filthiest" part of the human anatomy—it is a triumphant symbol of protest against any or all oppressive power structures.

The Judas ritual was the people's assertion of the freedom of speech and thought during the Revolution of 1896, as well as their realization of the Spaniards' use of the Catholic Church as an instrument of state oppression. When the Filipinos liberated themselves from the abusive authority of the Catholic Church, their sense of triumph expressed itself in a display of phallic power.

As such, the discourse of Judas's phallus extends beyond the little plaza of Barrio San Pedro and penetrates all of Philippine culture, most especially in areas of culture where sexual discourse is deliberately suppressed as taboo, either by censorship or by a bourgeois sense of "decency and good taste."

But the phallus as a signifier of revolutionary power has since been coopted in various ways, too. Phallic power is what President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo hopes she is exhibiting when she parades alleged criminals or terrorists before the public. It is all the commerce that goes on outside the Quiapo cathedral, with the mandrake roots, the abortifacients, the Sto. Niño image with the erection, the prayers and love potions—all for sale. The third finger, which is the digital representation of phallic power, is what Kris Aquino gives the Filipino people when she deliberately transforms her private life into a public scandal in her very own confessional booths, her TV talk show and GKNB (Game Ka Na Ba).

Vanishing rites

Phallic power is what is steadily shrinking in the barrio of San Pedro, mainly because of the loss of husbands gone to sea or their emasculation by the departure of wives gone to Japan and other such global employers. The ritual of Judas and his phallus has been gradually disappearing from the barrio that created it. Who knows but that it may vanish altogether sooner than later. But the text of the Judas ritual is not circumscribed by the plaza where he is hanged and set on fire. Judas and his phallus is everywhere around us. It is just a matter of reading it everywhere it is inscribed.

AFP clears four generals after hearing 70 witnesses

From page A1

Also cleared was retired Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani, who was accused of being sympathetic to the opposition.

"On the four senior officers mentioned [in the "Hello Garci" tapes], not one of the witnesses testified on any direct knowledge whether or not they participated in any election fraud," Mayuga said on NBN-4.

"Of the 70 resource persons interviewed, there was no mention of any direct evidence that will link these four gentlemen to any election fraud," he said.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor preempted Mayuga's announcement when he told reporters in Baguio City that the report cleared the generals mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes.

Esperon was deputy chief of staff for operations [J3] and deputy commander of Task Force HOPE [Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections] during the elections. He was named Army chief last August.

Habacon was commander of the 1st Infantry Division based in Sulu while Kyamko was Southcom chief during the elections. Gudani was then the commander of the First Marine Brigade based in Marawi City.

Abu ordered probe

The probe started in late July, nearly two months after the purported conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which the two allegedly discussed ways to ensure her victory by at least a million votes became known.

The vote-rigging allegation sparked calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation.

Then AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu ordered the probe after a number of active officers led by former Scout Rangers chief Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Marine Col. Ariel Querubin threatened to resign or go on mass leave unless the officials implicated in the "Hello Garci" scandal were investigated.

Lim and Querubin themselves were implicated in a plot by elite military troops and police to withdraw support from Ms Arroyo last Feb. 24, when she placed the country under a state of emergency until March 3.

Lower-ranked officers

Mayuga said the board did not find any irregularities committed by the about 300 officers and soldiers who were deputized as members of the Board of Election Inspectors.

But he said some lower-ranking officers whom he did not identify should be further investigated for possible involvement in election irregularities. He did not say if these irregularities were related to Ms Arroyo's candidacy.

"Ours is not to pass judgment on culpability," Mayuga said.

He also suggested that the practice of deputizing the 120,000-strong military for election duty be reviewed. Soldiers are traditionally assigned to guard ballot boxes and the canvassing of votes.

Mayuga noted that the canvassing of votes was conducted inside two military camps and the assistance of soldiers was solicited in the clustering of precincts in some areas.

The President reviewed the report and approved its recommendations, according to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

"We have nothing to hide and there is nothing to be defensive about in the AFP fact-finding report," Bunye said in a statement.

"With the President's order to make public the contents of the report, we hope that this would help end the intrigues intended to malign the President and divide the Armed Forces," Bunye said.

Present evidence

Defensor said the administration was expecting to be criticized by people who would not agree with the report's findings.

"If they are insisting that there was cheating in the election, they must work to present the evidence," he said.

After the investigation by the Mayuga body, Defensor said what was "more important" was the reforms to be instituted "to protect the AFP and the process of elections in the country."

The broadcast over government TV nearly did not push through after the military brass canceled their reservation for the 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. time slot after learning that the media had gotten wind of their TV appearance.

Broadcast site secret

The top brass apparently thought reporters would go to the NBN-4 studios in Quezon City to interview them. They decided to push through with the broadcast from an undisclosed place.

Col. Tristan Kison, AFP Public Information Office chief, said on Tuesday that Senga and Mayuga would present the report at a news conference. He could not be reached yesterday.

He only sent word to one reporter that the announcement would be made over NBN-4 at around 4 p.m.

The fact-finding board wrapped up its investigation in October but Mayuga, who was then the AFP Inspector General, did not submit it until Jan. 20. Mayuga was named Navy chief on Dec. 8.

Senga forwarded the report to Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. in late February. Cruz in turn forwarded it to Malacañang on April 5.

The AFP had to get the President's permission to disclose the report.

Relieved for no clear reason

In the tapes, a man believed to be Garcillano told a woman believed to be Ms Arroyo that a General Gudani was sympathetic to the opposition. "Garcillano" told "Ms Arroyo" he had coordinated with a General Esperon and a General Kyamko to relieve Gudani.

Gudani was relieved as brigade commander during the crucial canvassing of votes for no clear reason.

In the tapes, "Garcillano" also complained to "Ms Arroyo" that a General Habacon did not know how to manufacture election documents.

Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao and his predecessor, now Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, were also mentioned in the tapes. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Too little, too late, says opposition of Mayuga report

From page A1

the results of the investigation conducted by Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga only raised more questions than answers.

"It only proves that the AFP has not really been insulated from politics," Sen. Jamby Madrigal said.

Lacson lamented that AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga and Mayuga had failed to take advantage of their positions to thoroughly investigate the "Hello Garci" scandal that has been hounding the Arroyo administration since June last year.

The scandal revolves around purported wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which they allegedly conspired to rig the results of the May 2004 presidential election.

In one conversation, Ms Arroyo supposedly asked Garcillano to ensure a one-million vote lead over the late actor Fernando Poe Jr., the opposition coalition's standard-bearer.

The tapes mentioned Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Gabriel Habacon and retired Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko as supporters of Ms Arroyo.

Sanitized

Lacson said he was not ruling out that the Mayuga report had been sanitized.

"Yes," Lacson said when asked if he had information the report had been cleansed.

"And if proven, it could blow up into something that the AFP leadership and Malacañang can't manage and control," he said.

Lacson, a former Philippine National Police chief, however, declined to say which parts of the report had been sanitized and at what level of the government this was done.

Biazon said he would formally ask for a copy of the Mayuga report and the statements of some 70 witnesses so he could use these as a take-off point for his next hearing in late May.

"I need to examine the report and the statements. How was the investigation conducted? How were the questions asked?" said Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense.

Names of witnesses

The senator said he would also ask the military to give him the names of the witnesses to establish if they included military personnel who had signified their willingness to testify at the Senate inquiry but later decided not to.

"I wanted to know if the witnesses included people who had approached me, but clammed up because of what happened to Gudani and Balutan," he said.

After testifying at the Senate committee's Sept. 28 hearing, Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan were subjected to court-martial proceedings for defying the President's order not to appear at the inquiry.

Gudani, who was mentioned in the Garci tapes, denied any role in election fraud and testified at the Senate that First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo flew twice to Mindanao to deliver P500 million before the 2004 elections, a claim flatly denied by the President's husband.

Biazon said he would invite some of the witnesses to the next hearing and hoped that by that time, the Supreme Court would have ruled on Executive Order No. 464 which bars government officials from hearings without the President's consent.

Unless the order was lifted, there would be no closure to the scandal, he said.

Is this original report?

Golez, who had served as national security adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said the delay, "fairly or unfairly, casts serious doubt on whether this is the original report."

"People will never forget Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye's 'I have two CDs (compact discs)' statement, the fake and the genuine (phone conversations).

"So, does the presidential spokesperson have only one report or two?" the congressman said.

Golez claimed last year that he had received information that members of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines were the ones who bugged the phone conversations between Ms Arroyo and Garcillano.

Timing suspect

Garcillano had repeatedly told a joint congressional inquiry that he was no "superman" who could single-handedly manipulate the election results to ensure Ms Arroyo's victory.

The wiretaps triggered an impeachment drive in the House of Representatives, which was easily defeated by the administration's allies.

Golez said the timing of the report's release was suspect. "Or is this news management, knowing [there are] no major newspapers on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday? And praying the issue would die and blow over by Easter. They should not be too confident the issue will not resurrect," he said.

For his part, Balutan wanted to know the reason Esperon, Habacon and Kyamko were cleared by the military board.

A formal investigation of the activities of the generals during the presidential election would have been preferable to a mere "fact-finding inquiry," Balutan said.

Junior officers' clamor

He said the clamor of junior officers was to know what really happened during the presidential race. "If they said they were cleared, that means the boxing is over," he said.

Marine Col. Ariel Querubin refused to comment on the report. His wife said the colonel "does not want to rock the boat."

"He has a gag order," his wife Flor said on the phone.

Palace assures 6 sure of awards; more to be added to list

From page A1

tial adviser on culture, also said "maybe one, two, even three names" could still be added.

Muslim sculptor

Yesterday, Palace Chief of Staff Michael Defensor indicated who the additional awardee might be—Muslim sculptor and painter Abdulmari Asia Imao.

Defensor said a group of Muslim cultural groups had been clamoring for Malacañang to give a Muslim artist the National Artist Award, the highest national recognition accorded Filipinos who had made significant contributions to the arts.

He said he "accidentally sat" in on a recent Palace meeting where the Muslim clamor for Imao being recognized was discussed and said this might be the reason Malacañang was "holding back" from announcing the final list of awardees.

Earlier on Tuesday, Malacañang released a list containing the names of six distinguished Filipino artists—Bienvenido L. Lumbera (literature), Ramon A. Obusan (dance), Benedicto Cabrera (visual arts), Ildefonso P. Santos Jr., (architecture), Ramon Valera (fashion design) and Poe (film)—who will be conferred the rank and title of Order of National Artist.

Official list withdrawn

Later that day, however, Palace executives scrambled to pull back the memo from public release, claiming that the list was not yet final and the selection process was still going on.

But Ambeth Ocampo, the chair of the joint board of commissioners of the National Commission of Culture and the Arts, told the INQUIRER the other day that the selection process had been completed and the list of recommended awardees sent to the Palace which confirmed them.

The NCCA jointly administers the awards with the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The two institutions conduct the "committee of peers" review of the candidates and make the recommendations to the President who confirms the awardees and makes the final announcement.

According to sources in the cultural community, the awards have been attended by controversy in the past because of Malacañang's propensity to add names to the list of recommendees made by the selection process although they made clear that Presidents were legally within their rights to do this.

Palace review

Alvarez, who is also executive director of the NCCA, took the Palace line that the selection process was not yet complete. She explained that after the selection body sends its list to the President, there was still a Palace "honors committee" review before the decision was made on the final list.

She said the honors committee had yet to meet on the 2006 awardees. Aside from the President, this committee is made up of Ermita and Joaquin Lagonera, the senior executive deputy secretary. She said she might also be asked to join the committee's meetings.

Alvarez confirmed that Imao was being considered by Malacañang because letters had poured in from Muslim cultural organizations in his behalf after the original six were chosen. She said Imao was on the list of candidates considered by the selection committee but was not chosen.

"He (Imao) deserves it (the award) because he is the first Filipino Muslim to gain international fame for his art," said Alvarez, who refused to call the pressure from the Muslim organizations on Imao's behalf "lobbying."

Imao, who hails from Jolo, Sulu, draws his inspiration from the Tausug and Maranao artistic traditions of Mindanao, particularly the art of the okir wood-carving design, which he interprets in a contemporary idiom.

Proper respect

The President conferred on Imao the Presidential Medal of Merit only in June 2005.

Partisans of Poe, the opponent of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 election, reacted as if Malacañang was taking back the award that already belonged to Poe.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., claiming to have heard from his own sources that Malacañang wanted Poe stricken off the list, said it smacked of political persecution of the worst kind.

"It's a terrible thing. Now that he's dead, they're still pushing him around like a wet rag," he said.

Marichu Maceda, a close friend of Poe's widow Susan, said in an ANC television interview that Malacañang did not show proper respect for Poe when it bungled the announcement.

Alvarez clarified that the award for Poe was not being withdrawn.

"There's really no confusion. Since 2004, Poe had been nominated. But since the awards are given only every three years, we had to wait till 2006 to give it to him," she said.

Misunderstanding

Explaining how the misunderstanding could have happened, Ermita said the names of the six nominees were forwarded to the President by the National Film Academy under the supervision of the NCCA.

"Upon the approval of the President, it was handed to the Protocol [office] and given to the Office of the Press Secretary, but without knowing that there were still things that need to be done, need to be processed," he said.

He said the process was not yet final because his office had yet to prepare an executive order announcing the awardees.

"We are in the process of preparing that so until such time as we submit it to the President and she signs it, then nothing really is complete," Ermita said.

A lapse

He said "there must have been a lapse somewhere but ... the conferment [of the] awards is in June, so in a maximum of two weeks, everything will be final," he said.

"I don't think its anyone's fault. The Protocol and OPS just did not know that the documentation process was not yet finished," he said.

"I don't think there's anything to apologize for. These things happen," Ermita said. *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

BIR chief's presence panics tax-evading shopkeepers

From page A1

tailers who have failed to file sales tax returns.

He doesn't have to go far.

A request for receipts in one store elicits a blank look from the manager. On the wall is a photo of former first lady and infamous big spender Imelda Marcos checking out the shop's ornamental frogs, bags and air fresheners.

"I suppose she doesn't ask for a receipt," said Bunag, shaking his head.

Tax evasion has been described as the national sport of the Philippines, where more than two-thirds of self-employed people, from hairdressers to doctors, pay less income tax than they should.

Determined to beef up government revenue and her own paltry support level, President Macapagal-Arroyo has revived a three-pronged campaign to crack down on bootleggers, tax dodgers and internal corruption.

The snappily titled RATE (Run After Tax Evaders), RATS (Run After The Smugglers) and RIPS (Revenue Integrity Protection Service) failed last year to ensure that the Bureau of Customs and the BIR met their targets.

This year, an increase in the revamped national sales tax has helped the agencies beat their goals and squeezed the budget deficit in January and February to P40.4 billion, 16 percent below target.

$76-B debt

But analysts say the Philippines, Asia's largest issuer of government debt after Japan, needs to clamp down on tax evasion and establish a track record of improved revenue before rating agencies will upgrade the outlook on its $76-billion debt.

An improved credit rating could cut the cost of servicing that debt mountain and lift investors' confidence in the country.

The obstacles to encouraging full payment of dues are manifold amid widespread poverty, corruption and scant resources.

Bunag said his agency collected only 70 percent of what it should. Add that shortfall to the estimated P175 billion lost to smuggling, according to the Federation of Philippine Industries, and the state is missing out on around P400 billion a year.

Big fish

The BIR has filed around 50 tax evasion cases since March 2005 but no one has been convicted.

Officials have filed around 30 cases against tax collectors and customs officers accused of creaming off state funds, but no one has been jailed and only a handful have lost their jobs.

Bunag, who became BIR chief in July, believes publicity is the key. "We need to go after the big fish, some well-known individuals and companies," he told Reuters.

Some high-profile people were targeted last year, including ex-Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and a number of local celebrities.

But apart from Garcia—who was sentenced to two years at hard labor by a military court for illegally amassing wealth—no one has been convicted and the BIR still missed its 2005 collection target of P547 billion, hitting P534 billion.

Well connected

In a country where politics and big business are closely linked through family ties and patronage, nabbing big tax dodgers can be hazardous.

"They are well connected, they have influential friends.

You have to make sure that you do not step on anyone's toes," Bunag said.

Some analysts question whether the government has the appetite to go after major tax dodgers, with Ms Arroyo's position still weak after allegations she cheated in the 2004 election.

"I think there will be some improvement in collection and efficiency at the Bureau of Customs and the BIR," said Dr. Rosario Manasan, public finance expert at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies.

"But with regard to tax evaders, that program will not be pursued as strongly as it was last year."

Last year, Ms Arroyo cut the budget deficit to P146.5 billion, or 2.8 percent of GDP, beating a goal of 3.4 percent of GDP by keeping a tight lid on spending.

15% spending target

This year, the Philippines is aiming to cut its shortfall to P125 billion or 2.1 percent of GDP and has pencilled in a 15-percent increase in spending after years of restraint.

Under-funding and low salaries at the collection agencies are a major obstacle to improving tax returns. Graft is widespread and lack of resources is a constant frustration for the honest.

'Smuggler's paradise'

The absence of basic equipment and the multitude of private wharf have led the US State Department to describe the Philippines as a smuggler's paradise.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales has asked staff to bring paintings and plants into their dilapidated headquarters in an attempt to make the working day less stressful.

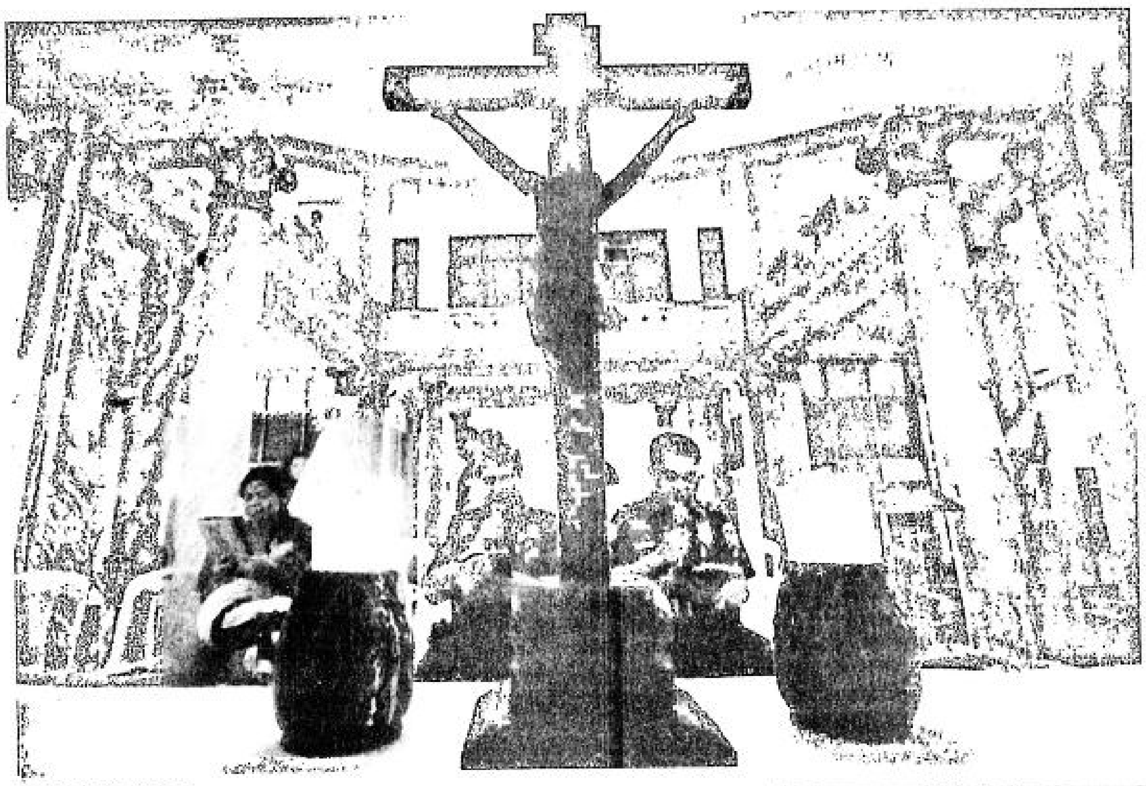
Customs officials trying to tackle smuggling along the country's 36,200-km coastline think sniffer dogs and boats would be more of a help.

"We do not have a single watercraft," said Nestorio Gualberto, director of customs' intelligence and enforcement.

"We rely on the coast guard or we have to use water taxis."

Reuters

SCENE STEALER$: How to keep holy the Holy Week



WHO'S KEEPING THE PEACE? The Manila Police District officers and men take turns reading the "pasyon," at its headquarters on UN Avenue, Ermita, an annual ritual that gives the cops time off for reflection.

REM ZAMORA

THE PASSION ACCORDING TO MILITANTS: Under GMA there's a crown of thorns to bear.

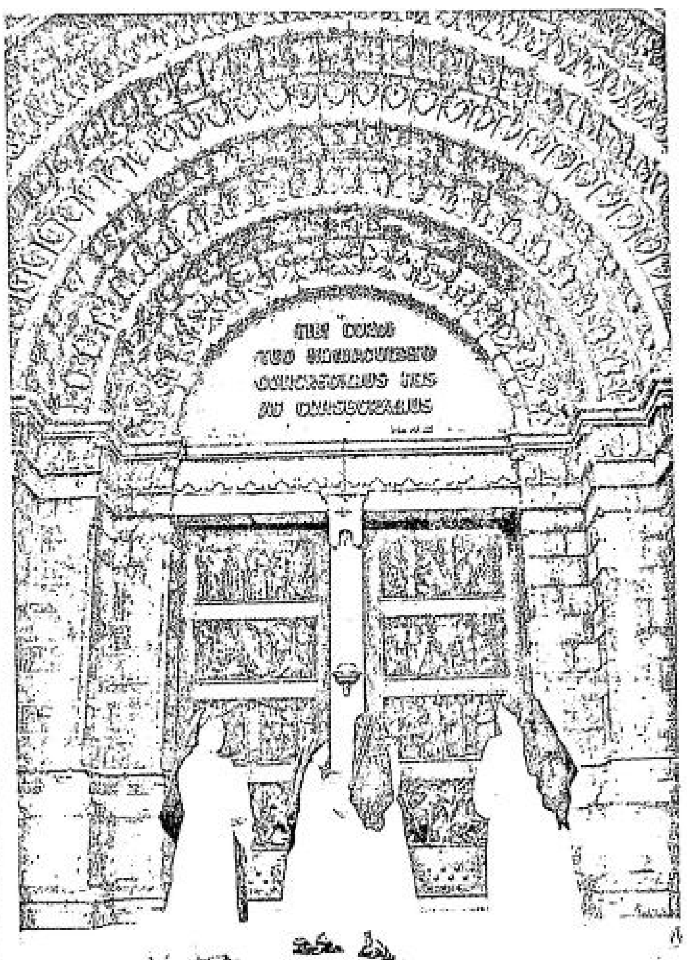
RAFFY LERMA

KNEE-DEEP DEVOTION of the faithful who are flocking to churches all over this overwhelmingly Catholic country.

AP

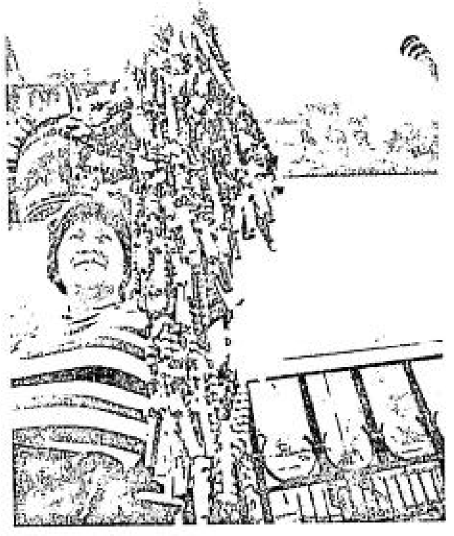
MORE PRAYERS said on the second day of the retreat of President Arroyo and her Cabinet in Baguio City. Front row, from left, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

LYN RILLON



LITANY OF PRAYERS: Lenten season or not, nuns never stop praying, never stop going to church. They are at the Manila Cathedral ahead of the hordes expected today for the rites of the Visita Iglesia.

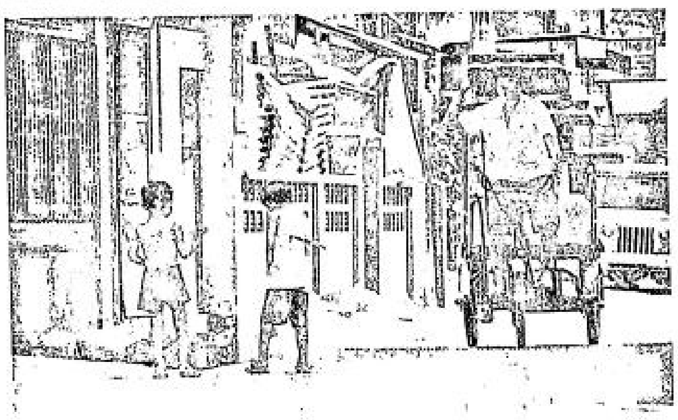
REM ZAMORA



CASHING in on the religious fervor of the week, a vendor sells wooden rosaries in front of the Manila Cathedral.

AP

> The faith of the Filipino is one of his jewels; often it's all he's got, and it is enough



LIKE FATHERS, LIKE SONS. In San Fernando, Pampanga, where flagellants and penitents reenacting the crucifixion abound, children early on learn what brings the visitors and the money in.

EDWIN BACASMAS

GOING HOME: (Above and right) Family after family leave the urban jungle for the kinder, gentler winds of their hometowns.

RAFFY LERMA

Half of carjack cases 'stage-managed,' say cops

By Luige A. del Puerto

ABOUT HALF OF THE CARjacking cases involving high-end vehicles in Metro Manila since January might have been "stage-managed"—that is, the cars were reported stolen in order to collect the insurance, police said.

The police said yesterday they plan to charge two persons with perjury after they reported that a P4.5-million Mercedes Benz had been taken from one of them at gunpoint by armed men in Manila.

The Philippine National Police-Traffic Management Group identified the duo as Mark Beran and Emilio Ong.

Investigation revealed that the Mercedes Benz had, in fact, been sold to a casino financier hours before the supposed car theft. The financier had the Benz all the time that it was reported stolen, the police said.

"Because of this incident, we are checking other cases of carjacking," said Chief Supt. Errol Pan, director of the PNP-TMG.

"My theory is that 50 percent of cases of carjacking during the first quarter involving high-end cars, meaning cars that use digital keys, were stage-managed," he said.

At around 10 p.m. on March 29, Beran, purportedly the son of a police captain, reported that four gunmen on two motorcycles took the Mercedes Benz from him while he was driving on P. Casal Street in Quiapo.

The car was owned by Ong, a resident of Ermita, Manila. Beran reportedly hung out at Ong's place, the police said.

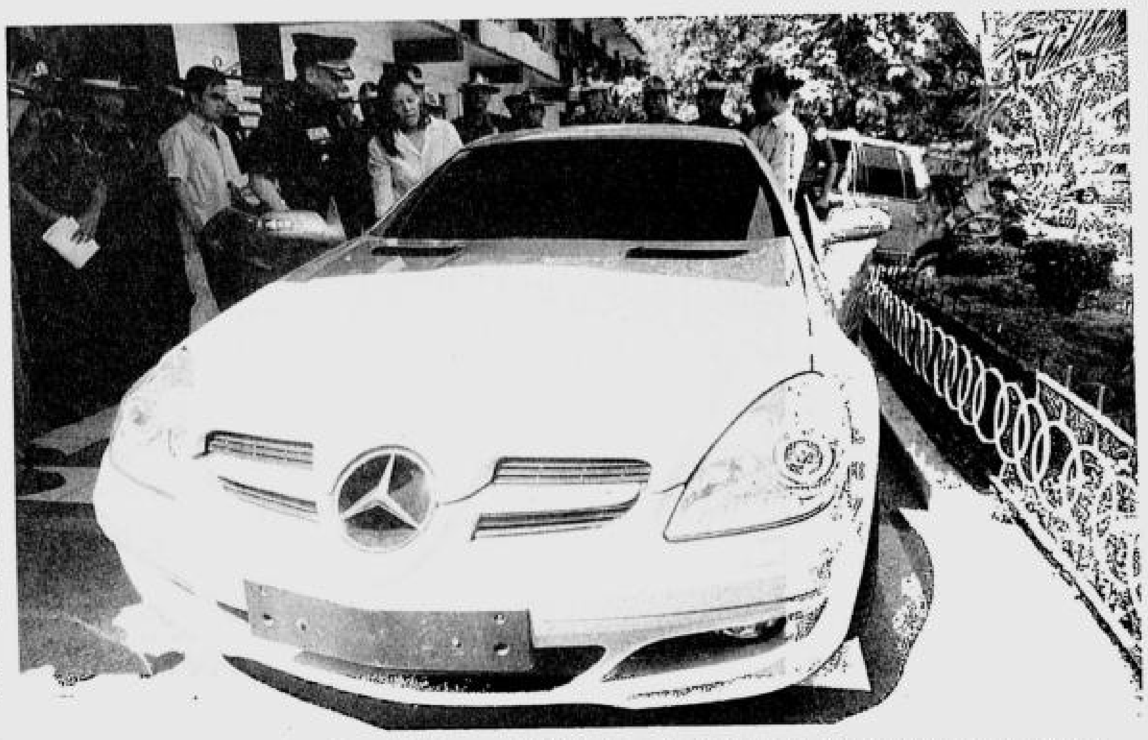
Yet, investigation revealed that Ong had sold the car for P1 million to an Alma Gonzales, supposedly a casino financier, some 12 hours before the robbery was reported, according to the TMG.

Quoting Gonzales, the police said in a statement that Ong had sold her the Benz for P1 million on the morning of March 29 because he "needed money to play at the casino."

That was why she was "surprised" to see a TV report on the carjacking incident.

"Gonzales said that Ong merely laughed when she called him up to clarify the matter," the police said.

"We are going to file criminal cases against persons who conspired... in reporting that their vehicles were stolen," Pan warned yesterday.



THIS is the silver gray two-door Mercedes Benz worth P4.5 million that was reported stolen by its owner who had actually sold it to raise gambling funds, according to police. JOAN BONDOC

This is how the scam works, according to Pan.

A high-end vehicle uses a digital key; it will not start otherwise. An insurance company, in processing a report of theft, usually requires that the owner bring along the car's keys.

To go around this, the owner would indicate in his or her report that the car was taken at gunpoint. Hence, the digital key was taken, too.

After 90 days, the police would issue a certificate of "non-recovery."

The owner can now claim the insurance on the vehicle.

Tillers say gov's son in illegal quarrying in Tarlac

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE SON OF Tarlac Gov. Jose Yap is allegedly behind the illegal quarrying of sand in several farms covered by the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac, leaders of farm workers told agrarian officials here on Tuesday.

Joseph Canlas of Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon said haulers invoked the names of the governor and his son whenever they were faced with protests by members of the United Luisita Workers Union (Ulwu).

Lito Bais, Ulwu director in Barangay Asturias in Tarlac City, said about 20 hectares had been quarried in the village since December last year.

But Victor Yap, the son and executive assistant of the governor, denied the allegation.

"I have never set foot on those villages and there's not even a person to link me [to illegal quarrying]," he said, adding that that illegal quarrying was taking place in Asturias allegedly under the protection of a village official.

Yap said he suspected that because of delays in the implementation of the northern phase of the P21-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project, the contractor might have been in a hurry to buy sand without determining if this came from sites covered by proper permits.

Contacted by mobile phone in San Jose town, Governor Yap laughed upon hearing the allegation against his son. "That's not true," he said.

The governor said a memorandum of agreement between the Hasama-Taisi-Nippon joint venture and Hacienda Luisita management provided for the extraction of sand and soil from the Asturias part of the estate.

"No money was involved in the hauling of sand. I did not want to give a permit before because there was a question on the ownership of the land. So the payments have been held in trust," the governor said.

He said he had obtained the Luisita management's consent for the hauling of soil in exchange for the construction by the Japanese contractors of a road connecting the Luisita industrial estate to the new expressway.

"The people will benefit anyway so I gave that a permit," the governor said.

Ulwu leaders confronted Asturias barangay head Rodolfo Galang recently on the quarrying activities, but Galang reportedly threatened them.

"We shall return for you. You better be lining up. You are NPA rebels," Bais quoted Galang as saying.

Felix Nacpil, another Ulwu director, said quarrying in Barangay Pasajes in Concepcion town had eaten up 40 hectares.

SC suspends judge for brokering real estate

LEGAZPI CITY—A REGIONAL TRIAL Court judge here has been suspended by the Supreme Court for three months without pay for violating the Code of Judicial Conduct by brokering a real estate sale and blowing the deal by not registering it.

In a decision penned by Associate Justice Salvador Valdez, the Supreme Court's Second Division said Judge Alfredo Kallos of RTC Branch 10 had interfered in a business transaction that damaged the regional court's integrity.

Kallos was fined P10,000 for the impropriety and was issued a warning that a repetition would be punished more severely.

The administrative case against Kallos stemmed from a complaint by Gary Rosauro, a local businessman to whom the judge had offered to sell a 235-sqm residential lot on behalf of Rodelia Esplana-Guerrero, the owner.

Records of the case showed that Rosauro had given Kallos P1,695,000 as advance payment but the sale was not consummated because of the judge's failure to register the deal. Kallos had also failed to settle a P50,000 loan from Rosauro, according to the records.

The INQUIRER repeatedly tried to reach Kallos for comment, but the judge could not be contacted. His neighbors said Kallos had made himself scarce and had been avoiding the media since word of his suspension got out.

Rosauro said in an interview yesterday that he wanted to buy the lot as a gift to his children, Marivic and Allan.

He described Kallos as a "compadre" and long-time tennis buddy and was saddened by his friend's actions. Rosauro said he had wanted to talk things over with Kallos but the judge had been avoiding him.

Rosauro said he was pursuing a criminal complaint against Kallos to teach him a lesson. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 13, 2006
Holy Thursday
Martin I

1st Reading: Ex 12:1-8, 11-14
Gospel: Jn 13:1-15

It was before the feast of the Passover. Jesus realized that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, and as he had loved those who were his own in the world, he would love them with perfect love.

They were at supper and the devil had already put into the mind of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray. Jesus knew that the Father had entrusted all things to him, and as he had come from God, he was going to God. So he got up from table, removed his garment and taking a towel, wrapped it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

When he came to Simon Peter, Simon said to him, "Why, Lord, you want to wash my feet!" Jesus said, "What I am doing you cannot understand now, but afterwards you will understand it." Peter replied, "You shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you can have no part with me." Then Simon Peter said, "Lord, wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus replied, "Whoever has taken a bath does not need to wash (except the feet), for he is clean all over. You are clean, though not all of you." Jesus knew who was to betray him; because of this he said, "Not all of you are clean."

When Jesus had finished washing their feet, he put on his garment again, went back to the table and said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also must wash one another's feet. I have just given you an example that as I have done, you also may do."

Commentary

Tonight the covenant is made whole again. We hear the ancient one of exodus—liberation from death and bondage, from slavery and Egypt—as we are called out as a people, sharing the lamb of God, with its blood smeared on the doorposts where they eat to their coming freedom. We remember. And we celebrate with the new Lamb of God—Jesus who will be taken out, crucified and will rise from the dead. We sit at table to break his bread and eat to our lives and deaths and resurrection with him, in him and through him. But first we wash feet—for that is the only memorial we are given in John. This is what is to be the perpetual institution: service of others, even those who betray us; service and love unto death. Then when we live this way, we share the feast with other sinners being saved and walk the death and resurrection with Jesus, who washes our feet, and head, and hands, and hearts this night. We imitate and remember, and put it all back together again in love.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (TORTS AND DAMAGES) – Moral damages – The concept of moral damages include physical suffering, mental anguish, fright, serious anxiety, besmirched reputation, wounded feelings, moral shock, social humiliation, and similar injury. Although incapable of pecuniary computation, moral damages may be recovered if they are the proximate result of the defendant's wrongful act or omission. Needless to say, the bank's wrongful act caused injury to respondent. Credit is very important to businessmen, and its loss or impairment needs to be recognized and compensated. (Citations omitted.) (Justice Tinga, Second Division, Prudential Bank v. Lim, G. R. No. 136371, November 11, 2005) BY R.V. VERA

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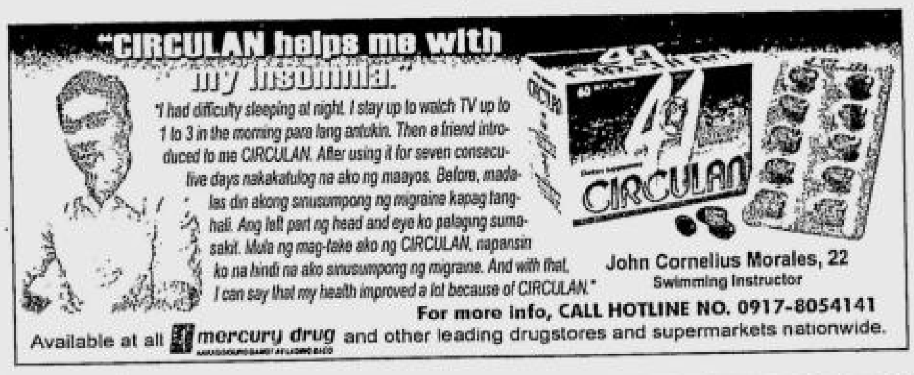

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AFTERNOON CHORE

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Two fishermen in a remote part of the San Fabian beach in Pangasinan retrieve their nets, hoping for a good catch, just before sundown. Fishing is the main livelihood of communities in the town.

Lenten practices bring down gang wars in jail

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—EVEN PRISONers observe the Lenten season.

For the past seven years, inmates at the Tacloban City Jail have been conducting the Seven Last Words and the Station of the Cross inside the compound of the prison's building during Holy Friday.

"We welcome this activity. They became religious even during this time by remembering the passion and death of our Savior," said Chief Insp. Edwin Riel, city jail officer.

He noted that since the prisoners started this, gang wars and jailbreaks have become a thing of the past. "I could not even recall the last time a jail break or even just an attempt took place."

The usual petty quarrels among prisoners would usually break the peace inside the facility.

But Riel said these were normal occurrences considering that the prison was packed with close to 700 inmates who are with different backgrounds and had different attitudes.

Inmate Anonito Abuque, 38, started the activity in 1999, a year after he formed the catechism group "Sanctuary for Free Spirits."

"This is the only time of the year when we remember Jesus Christ who gave up His own life to save us ordinary mortals. We may be prisoners but we still have to remember the things that He did for all of us," he said.

Abuque formed the catechism group in 1998, two years after he was imprisoned for robbery with double frustrated homicide. The case is now up for decision.

It took sometime for other inmates to join his group, which conducted Bible studies and sharing twice a week inside the facility.

But his efforts have paid off. From six members in 1998, their number has grown to 140 out of the 692 inmates in the city jail.

"I am happy of course. Perhaps, they have realized that God is the only way for us to be saved and at the same time, give us comfort during these trying times," said Abuque, a native of Marabut, Samar.

Abuque hopes that their numbers will continue to increase.

Autonomy seen thorn in Cha-cha side

BAGUIO CITY—EXECUTIVE SECRETARY EDUARdo Ermita said Malacañang has yet to agree on how it will deal with the consequence of a new federal government run by parliament on two autonomous regions mandated by the 1987 Constitution.

Section 15 of this provision mandates the formation of autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordillera "consisting of provinces, cities, municipalities, and geographical areas sharing common and distinctive historical and cultural heritage, economic and social structures."

"This will be the subject of great debate," he told the INQUIRER here on Tuesday.

Ermita was asked about reports that the regions' support for Charter amendments would rely on how the Arroyo administration resolves the issue of whether they should remain as independent states in a parliamentary-federal form of government.

Both the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Makati Business Club (MBC) assailed the Arroyo administration for pursuing constitutional reforms in haste.

But Ermita said they have been misinformed.

"It is only the pronouncement of some political leaders which gave us the impression that the administration seems to be hurrying up [Charter change]. But remember the President never said her timetable [for a new Constitution] is July," he said.

It was Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. who claimed that a plebiscite would be in place by July, allowing the country time to shift from a presidential form of government to a federated state run by parliament by the end of the year.

The CBCP "has the pulse of the people," Ermita said, and the phrase "haste makes waste is good advice coming from the business sector (referring to the MBC)."

Ermita acknowledged the latest results of a Social Weather Stations survey, which showed that a majority would vote against Charter change if a plebiscite were held today.

"In the same manner that you have been asking me that the surveys say the President's popularity has decreased ... we use surveys as a basis for presidential action. Nevertheless, we have to go by [projections we make about] what can happen in the future," he said.

"The people's initiative was done by local executives taking advantage of the barangay [assemblies] ... Of course, since the major reforms of the President is political reform and Charter change, [she] opted to [support] the initiative," he said.

"After all, what is the presidency about? It is about assisting government and doing something for the greater majority of the people. It's good we have surveys so we can have a benchmark," Ermita said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cordillera execs want plan to save Chico River

BONTOC, MT. PROVINCE—CORdillera officials want the master plan for the rehabilitation of the Chico River, once a major source of irrigation but now described as dying, completed before the year ends.

During a meeting of the regional development council (RDC) here last week, Mt. Province Gov. Maximo Dalog said there was a need to hasten the completion of the plan so they could take quick action on how to save the river.

"There is a need for the master plan because we perceive that if there is no planning, the sustainability of the river is in danger," he said.

Chico River is one of the major river systems of Northern and Central Luzon. The river passes through Bontoc, the capital of Mt. Province, down to the mainstream of Tabuk town in Kalinga.

Dalog said it is crucial to hasten the rehabilitation of Chico River because Mt. Province is the headwater of Northern Luzon.

Earlier, Dalog said large scale mining in the province was discouraged by most residents because of its impact on the environment.

Residents have been clamoring for a major cleanup of the river after it became an open dump for garbage. Pollution along the Chico's banks affects most of the towns of Mt. Province and Kalinga, which rely on the river for irrigation.

Tomas Killip, presidential assistant for Cordillera affairs, said the Chico River master plan is in line with the RDC's thrust to develop Cordillera as a watershed cradle.

The region has 13 river systems to sustain, he said.

"Let us try to rehabilitate the river. This river has the water capacity for the entire region. When we were children, the river was clean and alive. But now it is not moving anymore, it is already dying. This (plan) will try to address the problem," he said. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

'Holy karaoke' tries to make inroads into entertainment market

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—TIRED OF ALL the karaoke deaths caused by the singing of Frank Sinatra's "My Way"? At least this Holy Week, try "holy karaoke."

A new videoke microphone brings all the verses of the Bible and then with one push of a button, one can sing from more than 1,000 gospel songs.

"This was developed particularly for the Philippine market," said Orville Roque, president of the Astra Group Inc. (AGI), one of the two distributors of the XTreme Magic Sing Videoke Microphone.

"Hopefully by next year, we can include the Pasyon (The Passion of Christ)," Roque told the INQUIRER.

But for those who have no access to Pasyon—the narrative of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ sang during the Holy Week—at least one website has it online.

The website of Hagonoy town in Bulacan (www.hagonoy.com) contains all 160 pages of the Kasaysayan ng Pasyong Mahal ni Hesukristong Panginoon Natin (History of the Holy Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ).

Roque also said the "Gospel of Judas," a Gnostic text (one of Unorthodox Christian documents written in the first and second centuries), could also be included.

"The Bible microphone can be customized as long as there are more than 500 orders for that specification," Roque said.

He said the specification would be done in the main offices of Magic Sing's producer, the Enter Tech Inc., in South Korea.

Magic Sing's Version 10, which is sold for P12,500, has the Bible's New International version and the user can easily select the book, chapter and verse.

The problem, according to Roque, is that the background displays are the standard international and Filipino scenes found in their karaoke.

But Roque said users could install a picture background of their choice from an external video source like digital camera, camcorder, DVD or from the television itself.

"We expect the microphone to become popular immediately among church groups to enhance their congregational prayers, reflections, discussions and worship with its highly-adaptable control features," he said.

Aside from Astra, the other distributor of Magic Sing Videoke Microphones in the Philippines is the In-a-Jiffy Enterprises.

Roque said he expects no resistance from conservative religious groups in their distribution and marketing of the microphone.

"We live in an electronic age where the electronic media is indispensable. Once the Bible microphone is used by a group, the demonstration effect will come into play," he said.

When the user switches to the videoke mode, the Bible microphone contains 1,050 Christian praise songs and hymns. The user can then select traditional church instruments like piano, organ and drums, as well as set various voice combinations.

Although karaoke is internationally known as a Japanese invention, many Filipinos still believe Filipino inventor Roberto del Rosario's sing-along system was the prototype.

In 1994, Enter Tech reinvented the karaoke by coming up with a line of compact video karaoke system. The bulky karaoke's visual and audio qualities were built into a single microphone.

Roque said when Magic Sing was introduced by AGI four years ago, only a few can afford its P10,000 price tag. But even then, Filipinos were already karaoke crazy.

In its website, the Department of Trade and Industry said Filipinos in 2001 bought 75,700 units of karaoke compared to 43,700 videocassette recorders and 10,600 units of video compact disc players, 302,100 radio sets or music centers and 883,100 units of color TV.

To whet the Filipinos' appetite for Original Pilipino Music (OPM), Magic Sing now has six Tagalog chips with each chip containing at least 500 songs, aside from the built-in chip that contains more than 2,000 songs. A "praise" chip has more than 500 songs.

Roque said a substantial number of their customers are *balikbayan* (returning Filipinos), who would either bring back the karaoke microphones when they come home or ask a relative to buy them.

He said they find it much cheaper to buy them here than order them abroad. The *balikbayan* also like the Filipino backdrop, he said.

Gov't not giving up on rehab of Laoag airport

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—GOVERNMENT planners are not giving up on improving the Laoag International Airport (LIA) despite the diminished fund sources that have been allotted for its upgrade.

Hermenegildo Dumlao, executive director of the North Luzon Growth Quadrangle Area (NLGQA), said improving the airport is crucial in the government's efforts to promote tourism in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Pangasinan.

Dumlao gathered tourism planners in the Ilocos region last week to consult them on tourism development and to assess the capability of the tourism industry.

The consultation also provided an avenue for government planners to solicit private sector's support in tailoring their action plans on tourism initiatives with the Laoag airport development in mind.

Dissatisfaction

Dumlao did not hide his dissatisfaction on the failure of Ilocos leaders to capitalize on the P2.8-billion fund intended for the airport's upgrading in 1998. The budget for the LIA was later diverted to the rehabilitation of Iloilo International Airport.

"We will give Laoag last chance [to improve its facilities], otherwise, we will lose out to Cebu, Clark and Davao," Dumlao told the tourism industry stakeholders.

After the P2.8 billion was diverted, the NLGQA could only rely on sourcing additional funds for the LIA upgrading from government line agencies, primarily the Department of Transportation and Communications.

Dumlao, however, assured LIA officials that funds from Europe are being sought to augment the airport's development program.

In a letter to Dumlao, Robert Castañares, DOTC assistant secretary for planning and project development, said P8 million was allotted for the construction of the LIA's perimeter fence, improvement of its administration building and the rehabilitation of runway lights.

The DOTC has also proposed another P52 million for the improvement of airport facilities under the department's infrastructure program this year.

More funds

Ronald Estabillo, LIA manager, said the Laoag airport has yet to comply with the standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

He said authorities are working on upgrading the airport's level of protection from Category 4 to Category 9 so it can accommodate bigger planes.

The airport also lacks firefighting equipment and visual landing aid in times of bad weather.

During the forum, Tourism Undersecretary Oscar Palabyab said the LIA faces a reduced passenger load because of the smaller carrier that services the Laoag-Manila-Laoag route.

Cancelled

The 83-seater Asian Spirit has taken the route from Philippine Airlines before it decided to cancel its four-times weekly flights. PAL planes can accommodate 150 passengers.

Members of the Regional Development Council had promised to ask businessman Lucio Tan, PAL president, to resume the carrier's flights to Laoag because the LIA plays an important role in promoting trade and tourism in the Ilocos.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Sculptor starts carving with a prayer

By Edgar Alejo
Legazpi City

EVERY TIME HOLY WEEK APPROACHES, NOTED Bicolano sculptor Ely Benito of Legazpi City keeps himself doubly busy with the traditional religious activities spearheaded by the St. Gregory the Great Cathedral Parish Pastoral Council.

For several years, as consistent chair of the procession committee, he has been leading these annual religious preparations where he noted an increasing number of "*pasos*" (holy images) in the grand summer procession.

This time, he's doing it again, and it has become both as "*panata*" (promise to God) and a legacy to his family.

Besides his active involvement in the Church, Papa Ely, as he's fondly called even by the bishops, is contributing this Holy Season a 14-piece sculpture for the pilgrim-church of St. Lawrence the Martyr in Tiwi, Albay.

Fr. Ricardo Barquez Jr., parish priest, who commissioned the veteran sculptor, lauded the latter's work, saying "it's a realistic presentation of the different portrayals of the Stations of the Cross."

In a cell phone interview, Fr. Barquez said the artwork would be installed and unveiled in time for the Semana Santa when people are accustomed to turn to God and do penance as they recollect the Lord's Passion.

The sculpture, which he completed in just a month-and-a-half, is made out of fiberglass resin in antique bronze finish.

It visually depicts the characters and scenes of the Passion of Christ that would effectively endear the thousands of pilgrims from all over the region who flock to the sacred place in Tiwi town every month of August.

Papa Ely has been building monuments and creating carvings of religious images for churches all over the Bicol region.

A "*paso*" owner, he produced additional images in his "Station X—Jesus is Stripped of His Garments," now joining with new faces in the well-participated as well as crowd-drawer procession in Albay district.

One of the landmarks he has installed is the revolutionary hero, Gen. Simeon Ola, mounted on a war horse at the Heritage Park of Camp Ola (named in honor of the last Filipino general to surrender to the Americans) where his basalt volcanic rock creations abound.

Asked why he's using volcanic rocks, Papa Ely said "I found beauty in Mt. Mayon. She could be furious sometimes but she's calm and beautiful always. It's also reasonable since the materials are very expensive nowadays."

He also made the bust of Spanish conquistador Miquel Lopez de Legazpi at the City Hall Compound.

At Buang Park in Tabaco City, he set up a nine-foot statue of Daragang Magayon in marble finish.

BICOLANO sculptor Ely Benito and his 14-piece Station of the Cross.

NIÑO JESUS Y. ORBETA

Papa Ely is the founding chair of the "Kairiba Para sa Arte-Bikol (Kaparte-Bikol) and a member of the Art Association of the Philippines and the Center for Bicol Arts Foundation Inc. (Cebica).

With the equally famous members of these associations, he has participated in several provincial and national exhibits.

His advice to fellow artists, particularly the new ones: "Keep on working. We can't do it overnight. Persevere. Work. Unknowingly, we already achieve it."

His secrets as an inborn talent include a well-concentrated visualization, dedication to work, and the guidance of the Lord. He said that everytime he starts his work, he prays and glorifies the Lord—after which, doing the rest seems so easy.

Until now, Papa Ely continues to explore and experiment. He believes that "there's no perfect art."

"It's unending," he stressed.

Banahaw finds rest for 2 years after trekkers were banned

DOLORES, QUEZON—Mt. Banahaw was at peace for two years.

A move to ban urbanites from trekking the mountain for nature trips disguised as a pilgrimage during the Lenten season apparently worked.

Two years after the ban was imposed, the people of Barangay Kinabuhayan, at the bosom of the mountain, are at peace with their mountain again, saying that the mystery of Banahaw is no longer disturbed.

"The sacred aura of Mt. Banahaw is now beginning to show again. It's now peaceful and quiet just like the old days when this place was not yet known to nondevotees," said Supremo Jose Illustrisimo, leader of religious sect "Tatlong Persona Solo Dios" based in the village, recollecting the past.

He recalled how it was in 1936 when his late father, Agapito Illustrisimo, founded the religious sect and founded a settlement in the place near the river, which they now revere as holy. Almost all residents in Kinabuhayan belong to "Tatlong Persona Solo Dios."

"I was then 7 years old. The place was surrounded by huge forest trees," the religious leader recalled.

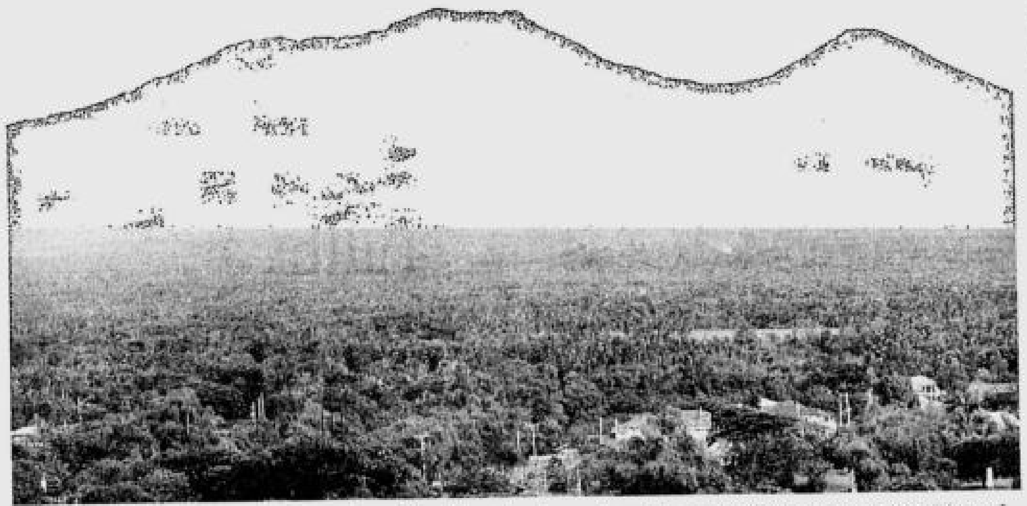
Illustrisimo recalled that when the Kinabuhayan river near the sect compound was still crystal clear, devotees washed their feet there before starting the trek to different sacred spots atop the mountain.

He remembered the times when former President Manuel Quezon visited the place to meditate.

"He usually arrived here in the company of the provincial governor. He visited the different *puestos* to pray and meditate," the religious leader said.

The religious Supremo said that during the Holy Week, sect leaders from across the country return to Kinabuhayan to renew their ties with their spiritual roots.

Gloria Diala, 69, also a member of the religious sect and long time inhabitant of Kinabuhayan, reminisced about the first time she set foot in the serene village in 1958.



MYSTIC Mt. Banahaw beckons to the spiritual, but has been closed to nature trippers who were blamed for trashing the mountain.

DELFIN MALLARI JR.

"This place was so beautiful. The climate was cool, birds were chirping and there was fresh flowing water. It was like paradise," she said.

She recalled that whenever the sect members had to urinate, they can't just do it elsewhere.

"The visitors have their own canister for their urine. That's how we respect this place," she said.

"One has to wear extra clothes to keep the body warm especially at night. The grass is always dewy. I always feel good and contented here during those times. We were all religious pilgrims here who flocked here for silent prayers and meditation. There was no mountaineer yet," she recalled.

Nowadays, Diala said she wants to spend the remaining years of her life amid very serene and quiet surroundings.

"It's alright with me if Mt. Banahaw will stay closed forever," the old woman said in a whisper.

Aside from the "Tatlong Persona Solo Dios," another influential religious sect whose members also climb Mt. Banahaw every Lenten season has also expressed approval of the mountain's closure.

According to the leaders of "Ciudad Mistika de Dios" based in Barangay Santa Lucia, majority of the 80 sects that hold their rites in the mountain would respect the decision to insulate San Cristobal-Banahaw from outside intrusion for much-needed rehabilitation.

Of the 80 groups, 20 are based—or have places of worship—within the area covered by the Protected Area Management Board directive.

The mountain forms part of the Mt. Banahaw-San Cristobal National Park, declared as a protected area in June 2003. The park covers the municipalities of Sariaya, Candelaria, Tayabas, Lucban and Dolóres, all in Quezon, and Rizal, Nagcarlan, Liliw, Majayjay and San Pablo City, all in Laguna.

To many, Mt. Banahaw is inhabited by spirits, elements and other-worldly beings. Many believers trek its slopes in hopes of experiencing something divine, particularly during the Lenten season.

> 'To many, Mt. Banahaw is inhabited by spirits, elements and other-worldly beings'

In the summer of 2004 several days before the Holy Week, the PAMB sealed off with barbed wires several trails leading to areas in the bosom of Banahaw to start the five-year rehabilitation program that would resurrect the mountain's natural resources.

It was not only slash and burn (*kaingin*) farming that left a scar on the mountain's surface.

The irresponsible practice of mountain climbers, composed of modern pilgrims and urban nature trippers, have also added to the mounting pressure on the mountain's ecosystem. They leave behind styrofor boxes, empty water bottles and cans at almost every spot of the mountain after the Lenten period.

Even enterprising children from Kinabuhayan village were aware of the reason behind the absence of their former mountain-climbing clients.

"The mountaineers dump their trash just about anywhere. Even if we reminded them (not to leave trash), they just laugh at us," recalls Baroy Zena, 10; Christian Ele, 9; and Richard Rebamba, 13.

The three friends find employment as guides to first time mountain visitors.

"Each of us used to earn at least P200 a day. We were also given lots of foods and candies," said Rebamba, the veteran tour guide among the three.

The guides also fetch water for a fee for the mountaineers on top of Banahaw. During Holy Week, the mountain is like a big set of stairs to most of the children. "We climbed the mountain several times a day. In the evening, we were dead tired in our sleep. But we're happy, we had plenty of money," Rebamba said.

"But now, we no longer have money. We were told that the mountain will again open in 2007. Hopefully, it will be true," he said as the group feasted on loaves of breads and big bottles of soft drinks.

In an inspection of Mt. Banahaw conducted last week by the DENR, local government officials and Tanggol Kalikasan staff workers, the group found improvements in the closed areas.

Water has returned to the falls, the trails are no longer recognizable due to the regrowth of vegetation, and wildlife has returned to the area.

The sound of flowing river provides an exhilarating acoustic backdrop to the urbanites' ear.

"But despite all these positive changes in Mt Banahaw, it still needs massive reforestation and rehabilitation. We should not let nature just heal itself. There's also a need for human intervention. We owe it to Mother Nature," said Manny Calayag, Dolores environment and natural resource officer.

To preserve the delicate balance of nature and the spirituality of the place, the local government turned down a proposal several years ago from a private resort firm to construct a swimming pool near the Kinabuhayan River.

Undeniably, there's a great potential for tourism to thrive in the place. But any eco-tourism undertaking in the area should seriously consider the revered spiritual history of the place. "So we rejected the proposal," Calayag said.

What worries the local government now is the danger from landslides and flash floods due to the altered topography of the place.

"We now have to conduct regular monitoring on the condition of the soil in the upper part of the mountain whenever there is a strong and continuous rain," Calayag said.

He recalled that Kinabuhayan and the nearby village of Sta. Lucia have already experienced big floods in the past.

Sally Pangan, protected area supervisor assigned by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to Banahaw, said in her inspection report that the soil erosion between Barangays Sampaloc 1 and Bugon in Sariaya was due to rampant illegal farming in some parts of the mountain.

Pangan discovered that the land in the area had no topsoil. The team also found traces of landslides during previous heavy rains that resulted in the contamination of the town's water supply and also of neighboring villages.

The extent of soil erosion, near the water source downstream, reveals a mismanaged watershed due to uncontrolled farming inside the mountain area.

"The slope of Banahaw de Dolores is the same in St. Bernard, except that our place is much steeper. God forbid, but we're not totally discounting the possibility that what happened in St. Bernard could also happen here. The occurrence of landslides and flash floods in these mountainous parts of Dolores is not a remote possibility," Calayag said.

Calayag also pointed to the volcanic and limestone wall at the back of the village.

"There's always a fire in that wall every four years, which softened the soil structure," he said.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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OPINION

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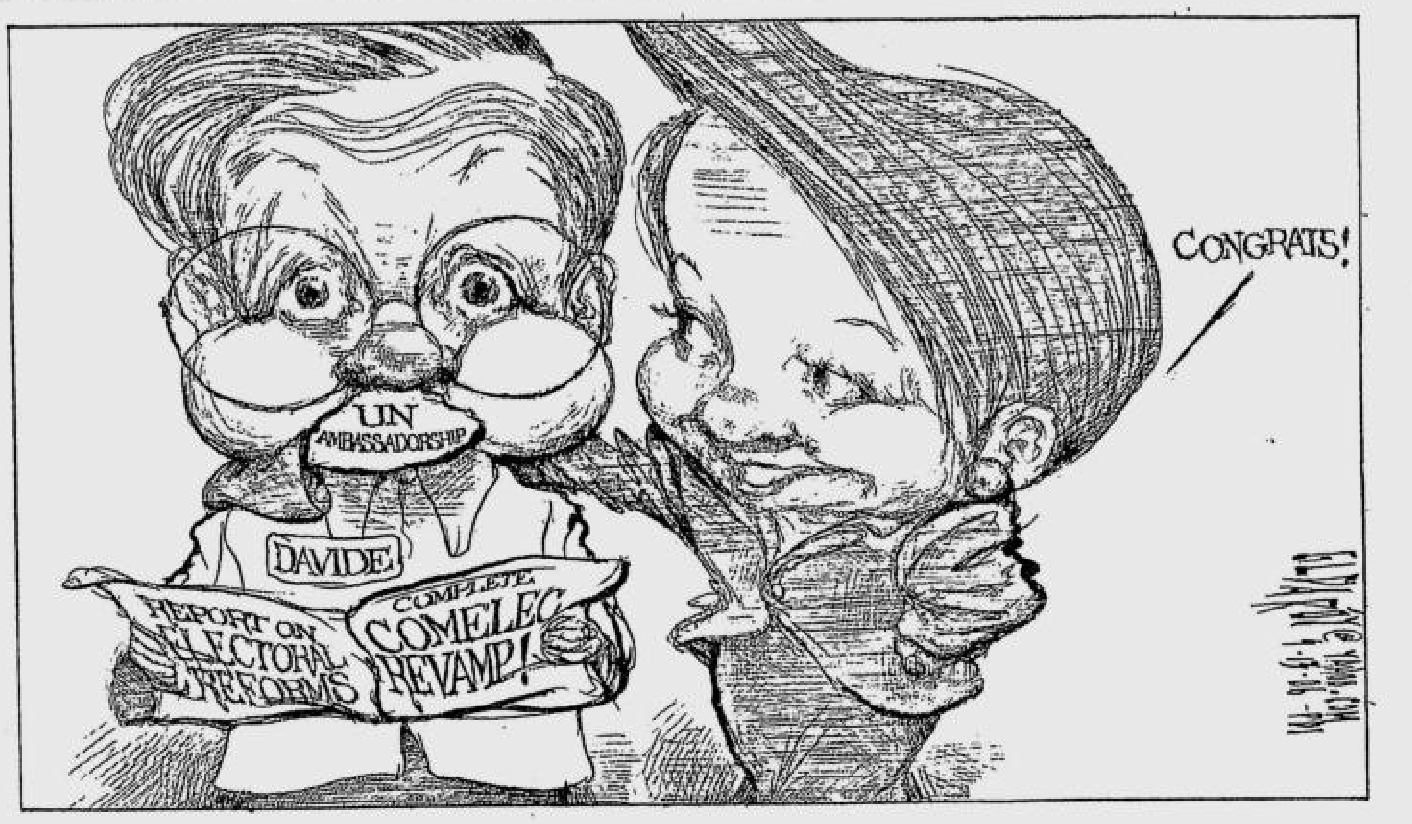

EDITORIALS

Paradox of Christ

ONLY DAYS BEFORE, THE MAN HAD SWEPT INTO Jerusalem, welcomed like a victorious Caesar amid the wild cheers of the throng. The next moment, the Establishment was bearing down on Him—a blasphemer to the religious leaders and a destabilizer to the Roman authorities. He would find refuge, although temporarily, in the Garden of Gethsemane. But soon, He would be in the hands of His persecutors, subjected to the cruelest of physical tortures and to the vilest indignities. Before long, He was once again plodding the streets of Jerusalem, only this time, with gashes and bruises, blood and grime all over His body, a crown of thorns on His head, and a heavy wooden cross on His back. The crowd that had hailed Him a few days earlier was also back on the streets, but the tumultuous cheers had turned into raucous jeers. A few hours later, He was on Mount Calvary, nailed to the cross—and dead.

His enemies thought they had buried Him forever in oblivion. Of course, at that time, they had no way of knowing that by dying He had conquered death. What looked like one man's total defeat, He turned into a monumental victory for all mankind.

This is the eternal paradox of Jesus Christ. As a text message that has been circulating this Holy Week puts it: "He had no servants, yet they called Him master. He had no degrees, yet they called Him teacher. He prescribed no medicines, yet they called Him healer. He commanded no army, yet kings feared Him. He won no military battles, yet He conquered the world. He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him. He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today."

Triumph of the spirit

INDEED, CHRIST'S LIFE IS A MESSAGE IN ITSELF, from which we can always draw a particular lesson or two to guide us at certain turns and times of our lives, if only we look closer. And what relevant lessons for our times may we draw from His passion and death?

Three immediately come to mind. From His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and crucifixion days later: "*Sic gloria mundi fugit.*" (All earthly glory is fleeting.) A timely reminder for our leaders who want to stay in power forever, never mind if they have to lie, cheat, steal, bribe, threaten, use force or initiate Charter change.

For a world increasingly awed by, if not obsessed with, wealth, fame and power: There are larger and greater things than our material treasures and desires, or even existence. All through His ministry, He kept emphasizing this: "Not by bread alone does man live." And "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?" He proved that He sincerely meant this with His life itself and with His examples—when He refused Satan's tempting offer of "all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them"; when He gave up all worldly attachments, including His family, and even His life.

Then, of course, the need to sacrifice for the larger goals. He had come to save the fallen man and He was the only hope for his salvation—no one else. But to fulfill His mission, He had to suffer pain and humiliation like no other man. And He knew that all this sacrifice would generally be unappreciated, especially by those who were meant to benefit from it the most. The thought of it almost broke His spirit. "Father, if you be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done." But He persisted, and sacrifice He did.

We are all too familiar with the rest of the story. It did not end, it made a new beginning.

Sense of spring

FOREIGN COMMENT

YARDS ALL OVER WINNIPEG ARE EMERGING AGAIN FROM under blankets of winter snow. They don't look like much, but gardeners are starting to think about how they might look as spring advances.

One thing many will be considering is the fertilizers needed to green up grass. As John Morriss, publisher of a farm weekly, said, Winnipeggers should keep in mind that some of that fertilizer will find its way into drainage systems and eventually into Lake Winnipeg.

Morriss argued that new regulations imposed on farmers to protect the lake should be extended to cities where fertilizers are used more for cosmetic rather than economic and environmental reasons. It's an argument that seems to make common sense and should be explored—at City Hall or on Broadway.

Free Press (Winnipeg, Canada)

'Itaga sa bato'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"NO VISITORS ALLOWED," THE HOSPITAL room signboard cautioned. The wife gently pressed me forward. So, we tiptoed in.

The gaunt man on the bed, hooked to tubes, was a friend for years. We shared laughter and troubles. And his kindnesses to me were many.

The priest, who earlier anointed him, brought the "Viaticum." That title for the Eucharist—our grade school teacher would repeat—came from the Latin language: *via tecum*: the "way with you." My friend would cross the passageway, but not alone. *Hindi ka nag-iisa.*

"I'm fighting," he gasped with his old grit. He never wasted time on self-pity. But now, a tear trickled down. He squeezed my hand hard. "It was good you came," he said haltingly.

Goodbye can be said in many ways. At a loss for words, I just squeezed his hand back. I closed the hospital door behind us softly, realizing that sooner, rather than later, we too would go the same way.

"Man is here today and gone tomorrow," the 14th-century monk Thomas a' Kempis wrote. "You're a fool if you assume you'll live long when you're not even sure of one day."

This week, folk *cenaculos*, *pabasa*, *siete palabras*, veneration of the cross, *visita iglesia*, and Easter Sunday Mass and *salubong* stress the mysteries of death—and resurrection. Some 2,500 years before, an empty garden tomb burst upon an incredulous world, a man spoke of the resurrection in "words engraved in rock."

Pastor Lino Pantoja observed: "We Filipinos use the idiom *itaga mo sa bato* (anchor to a rock) to assert our utmost confidence. The 'unrecognized prophet of Easter' was Job. And he cried: 'Oh that my words were engraved in rock forever.'

"They were words of his primitive theology of the resurrection: 'I know that my Redeemer lives. And in the end, He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.'" (Job 19: 25-27)

God had reduced Job to ignominy before people and remained silent to his cries. Here is the ageless question: Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?

Job's *De Profundis* was that his Redeemer would stand on the earth someday. This was a prophetic insight into God's coming to earth—or the Incarnation, Pantoja said. And Jesus did exactly that, as we know from historical hindsight.

The malignancy that corroded Job's skin resigned him to death. Yet, he affirmed his bodily resurrection: that he would see his Redeemer personally and physically. Thus, we learn that neither pain nor death is final.

"There will be a reunion with those who've gone ahead," Pantoja wrote. "On the basis of God's promise, I look forward to seeing my 18-year-old son who died of a brain tumor in 1989. He will rise again. And so will I." Still, many of us remain trapped by pre-conceived ideas of Easter, notes Irish theologian Eamonn Bredin. Easter is "little than the simple resuscitation of a larger-than-life Jesus." Thus, we lump His raising with that of Lazarus.

If that be the case, "then, we have no hope," Bredin writes in "Rediscovering Jesus." That's only a reprieve before slipping back into death. "If for this life only we hoped in Christ," St. Paul says, "we are, of all men, most to be pitied."

Today, four out of every 10 teenagers (aged 13-19) do not believe in life beyond death, a survey of 1,300 urban students by Philippine Jesuits found. "Those who believe 'there is no resurrection' are [the] majority of the young around us," Loyola School of Theology's Catalino Arevalo, S.J. pointed out.

What are the empty tomb and folded burial shroud to them? Will these kids, like the women on Easter morning, futilely "seek the living among the dead"?

Luke and John come close to a physical description of Jesus after his death by crucifixion. Time and space no longer bind Him. He comes and vanishes, even if doors are shut. Neither do they recognize Him immediately, whether in the Upper Room or on Lake Galilee's shores.

They encounter the crucified Jesus in a new way. "He had become another," Father Arevalo noted. "I think of that quaint expression people sometimes use in Taglish: You are very another *na*."

"Their eyes were opened," the evangelists add, "and they recognized Him in the breaking of bread"—a description of the Eucharist, since Pilate's time.

The disciples, too, were from the class D and E basement of society then. They abandoned their master. So, what transformed them after Easter?

They met Jesus after Calvary and arrived at a certitude—*itaga sa bato*: This Jesus who died on the cross had entered into a radically transformed life. He "brought Peter the Rock out of Simon the betrayer, or a crucified Paul out of a crucifying Saul, or the church of martyrs out of the scattered disciples."

The disciples' experience has been refracted to us over the centuries. Even those who live out the implications of Easter—Mother Teresa or John Paul II—stammer to articulate its meaning.

"Not everything has a name," Aleksandhr Solzhenitsyn writes. "Some things lead us into the realm beyond words ... For an instant, you glimpse the Inaccessible. And the soul cries out for it."

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Faith

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I CAN UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE COMplaints about The Da Vinci Code, which have become a little more strident as the movie looms. Movies being the more popular fare, Christians, or indeed Catholics, are a little more alarmed at the harm it can do to their faith. I myself have gotten text messages from acquaintances asking me to aid them in their campaign against the movie.

I'm afraid I can't do that. I enjoyed the book thoroughly—it helped me get through the long flight from Manila to Barcelona, itself an exercise of faith that metal could float in air. And I'm a great fan of some of the people involved in the movie. Dreamworks has produced some pretty dreamy works, and you can't go wrong with Tom Hanks. Jean Reno I like immensely, though he's a little more roller-coaster, rising to great heights in French movies and sinking to absolute lows in Hollywood ones. They should do a fine job with the book.

But like I said, I can understand some of the complaints. As Christian scholars aplenty have pointed out, the historical inaccuracies in "The Da Vinci Code" are legion. Never mind Brown's reinterpretation of Da Vinci's famous painting "The Last Supper," where Da Vinci presumably shows Christ being seated next to Mary Magdalene, who is his wife. (Though I did look for the painting after I read the book and was astonished to find that the person seated next to Christ truly looked like a woman!) Mind only that Brown ascribes to Constantine the fiat turning Jesus from an ordinary mortal into a divine being and the (quite literal) witch hunts the Church mounted against women in particular to obliterate all pagan beliefs, which extolled the sacred "feminine." Those things, the scholars fulminate, simply did not happen. There is no shred of evidence to support it. Which can't be excused simply by saying Brown's work is fiction.

I'll leave the historians, secular and religious, to debate the point. But if there is no shred of evidence to support the contention about Constantine's unilateral decision to confer divinity upon Christ and to mount a bloody pogrom against those who thenceforth challenged it, there is at least more than a shred of evidence to support the vicious way Christendom sought to enforce its hegemony over other faiths. It was no less vicious than the way the Islamic empire throughout its centuries of rule sought to stamp out infidels from the face of the earth.

"The Name of the Rose," Umberto Eco's far more brilliant and entertaining literary achievement, in part shows so. It has long chapters about the Inquisition, and how it employed torture to solicit unconditional belief from the faithful—or the fearful. More to the point, the late great John Paul II did completely factually and historically apologize to the Muslims for Christianity's crimes against civilization during the Crusades, and to the world of science and reason for its persecution of Galileo. To this day, you have people like Pat Robertson and his sponsors at the White House commandeering the name of the Christian God to wreak havoc upon the world. If the spirit of Brown's criticism, if not its letter, were largely nonsense, Church officials would not be particularly bothered by it.

Faith is a tricky business. I remember again the person who told me he belonged to the Couples for Christ and had no desire to read "The Da Vinci Code" because he did not want to lose his faith, or question it. I don't know how representative he is of Filipino Catholics. I have friends as well possessed of deep religious convictions who enjoyed the book and look forward to the movie. In politics as in religion, it's those who are confident of their convictions who do not particularly mind them being put to the test. On the other hand, it's those who cling tenuously to beliefs out of desperation or need who are so scared of losing them.

The furor about the "Da Vinci Code," book or movie, does raise an interesting point about faith. Which is that if some of Brown's contentions can be questioned on historical grounds, can't the same things be said of the Church's as well? Unlike Paul of Tarsus, the most influential articulator of the Christian faith next to Christ himself, Christ's utterances cannot be historically ascertained. That is not to speak of the miracles attributed to him, which are even more problematic. Unlike Mohammad or Buddha who are regarded by Muslims and Buddhists as prophets or sages, Christ is regarded by Christians as a God. That is no small contention, and I don't know that there is historical proof of the resurrection. In the end, what you really have, if you believe that, is faith. A leap of reasoning that can only be made in the heart and not in the head.

Which brings me to: But what is faith really?

I would imagine that its validity or value lies in what you become as a result of it. If Christianity or Islam merely turns you into a murderous fanatic ready to smite your neighbor simply because he does not share your ironclad conviction that Christ or Allah is the one true God, then I don't know that faith is worth having at all. I can only imagine, along with John Lennon, all the people living life in peace without country and religion too. But if faith fills your soul with joy and laughter, if faith causes you to espy the divine spark in the wonders of everyday life, especially in the greatest wonder of all, which is the human creation, if faith makes you tolerant and generous as your God bids you become, then maybe that is all the proof of God you need. In that case, I can only ask, along with Joan Osborne, "what if God was one of us?"

And answer: "Well, if he was, he'd probably watch 'Da Vinci Code,' The Movie, and have a good laugh."

'May Christ disturb your lives!'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FOR A LENTEN PIECE, I'M REPRINTING—COURtesy of lawyer Ruben O. Rivera—excerpts from the homily of the late Fr. Pacifico A. Ortiz about the legendary Fr. John P. Delaney. The beloved chaplain of the UP Catholic community in Diliman died January 1956 of a heart attack in Baguio. His so untimely death was mourned by the entire nation. Last March 6, the UP community celebrated his 100th birthday.

When I came to the UP in June 1956, Father Ortiz had just been appointed as Delaney's successor. I recall how he quipped that he was like the man who married a widow still very much in love with her late husband. He delivered the homily a year after Delaney's death. In it, he spoke of his predecessor's incredible "meddling" into the lives of the UP community members:

"It was the last Christmas in the old Chapel. *Sawali* and bamboo, leaking roof and rotting pillars, but to (Father Delaney) and his people, it was beautiful and much loved. Besides ... what more appropriate place to celebrate the Mass of Christ's birth than the dilapidated building which had been used a few years before as a stable for horses and carabaos? ... It is his Christmas wish, his prayer, his bequest: 'May Christ disturb your lives!' To some it might seem a strange greeting—but not so strange if you knew the priest, not so strange if you know Christ. Delaney was himself a disturbing personality: gaunt and challenging and uncompromising as the Baptist, his namesake; zealous and restless as Paul, his Patron; disturbing as Christ Himself.

"Delaney's most ardent wish was to give to others what has made his own life so full and so satisfying—he wanted to give them the disturbing personality of Christ. The poverty of Christ at Bethlehem had disturbed the rich; the humility and simplicity of Nazareth had disturbed the proud; the hard doctrine of the Beatitudes—detachment, purity, meekness, persecution—had disturbed the pusillanimous Jews; the spirit of unselfish sacrifice that had motivated Christ's whole life and had culminated on Calvary was, and continues to be, the most disturbing influence in the history of our race.

"... Delaney had given his whole heart to many people and many jobs in New York, Rome, Paris, and other cities ... But no one could ever doubt that he brought his whole heart to the Philippines. He once described himself as 'Irish by descent, English by birth, American by nationality—but Filipino by choice.' ...Other American Jesuits have lived and worked longer (here) than Delaney, but few have been as widely known or as deeply loved. Of course, he had his enemies, too—there were those who called him arrogant and a fanatic, who slandered him to his ecclesiastical and religious superiors, who agitated for his ouster from the University or his deportation .... But then, Christ, too, had His enemies as did the Baptist and St. Paul, and all for the same reason: they tried to disturb the hearts of men.

"... It was as moderator of UPSCA and UP chaplain that he exerted his most far-reaching and most lasting influence. In 1949, when the UP moved to its present site in Diliman, the faculty members and their families felt the need for the more extensive services of their chaplain and asked him to accompany them to their new home. Delaney cleaned up the stable and moved in. For 10 years he lectured to UPSCAns, for more than six years he lectured to the community—four times every Sunday, several times during the week. It might be a series of lectures on his favorite subject, the Mass; or a series on the students' favorite subject, Love, Courtship and Marriage; or a Cana Conference ... But always the subject was the same—Christ; and the message was the same—'May Christ disturb your lives!'

"... But his disturbing influence was not confined to UPSCAns and the community ... He was in constant demand for lectures and retreats and Cana Conferences outside. How many marriages he salvaged, God alone knows! How many thousands of young boys and girls he helped prepare for a happy marriage by the high ideals of purity he inculcated! How many he convinced that saintly living was not only desirable but possible! From UP, his influence radiated to every corner of the Philippines ....

"'May Christ disturb your lives!' Little did he realize how profoundly disturbed his own life soon would be: disturbed by the strain of getting the new chapel started, of answering charges, of protest rallies to Malacañang and investigating committees in the University. Is it any wonder that the strain was too much for that great priestly heart? Rather, the wonder is that he did not succumb sooner!

"Allow me to conclude this sketchy, superficial account of Fr. Delaney's work with his own words. Call it his 'Apologia for Meddling' by a Master Meddler.

"'Does Delaney meddle?' he asked the biased Board of Regents special committee before which he was testifying. And he answered his own question: 'Definitely, yes! Since 1949, I have meddled and meddled intimately in UPSCA and the lives of UPSCAns ... (and) in the life of the community and its families, sharing their fears, anxieties and joy and helping to form their conscience ... I shall continue to meddle as long as you and I are one in the intimate oneness of priest and people—as we have been, happily been, since first our pathways crossed in this beautiful experiment in community living in our Diliman.'

"'I know not what in Manila or in Davao or in Baguio or in any other corner of the country the color of my skin and the place of my origin would make of me; but not here, not in Diliman, surely, not in Diliman am I a 'foreigner.' If I were, then I would have to ask in honest bewilderment—how much more of himself must a man give before he can become one of you?'

"But he is one of us—'Filipino by choice.' And now he rests, undisturbed, in a little cemetery plot in Novaliches. But the memory of Father Delaney continues to disturb those who knew and loved him."

Psalm 69 for our times

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

FOR THIS HOLY THURSDAY, HERE IS A VARIAtion on the theme of Psalm 69 that I wrote for Holy Week in 1992. With a few changes here and there, it still applies 14 years later.

Save me, O God, for their diarrhea of words has come up to my chin. I am drowning in their slimy saliva and I slip everywhere I step. Into the depths I have been pushed and I am engulfed by the torrent of true lies and half-truths. I am weary from pleading that they shut up for a while and give my ears a rest. My throat is hoarse and dry.

More than the hair in their armpits and pubis is the dirt they have spread about one another. Oh, how they hate those who attack them. How they fight over the people's loyalty. They strut about like angels and yet people know they have stolen, they have lied, they have killed, they have fornicated.

O God, you know I am not faultless but also know that I do not covet a government position.

Do not allow me to become too cynical and do not allow me to be dazzled either. Oh Lord, help me keep my conscience and my actions pure, equip me with the power to smell the rotten a kilometer away.

Some of them now sound like strangers to me. I recognize some of them only by their looks. How they have been transformed by this political frenzy, how they have been changed by their desire "for the truth" when it is actually their desire for power that makes them froth in the mouth. They think their mouths drip with sweetness, but I can only smell the malodorous emission of a septic tank.

When we screamed for relief from the pollution and the traffic jam of their accusations, alibis and cover-ups, they pretended not to hear. When we accused them of neglecting their jobs, they threw back the ball and said yes they are, and that we have to do our part.

They rouse us from sleep with their antics, they wreck our schedules to make announcements and declare that danger stalks the land. Even those who call themselves holy are partaking in these exercises to take sides, to make their power felt, to convince themselves that they still matter.

During election season, oh, how they try to look like the working man, how they try to eat like the peasant. They wear faded clothes and lousy T-shirts hoping to look like the poor when in fact they only want to use the poor as footstools. Liars, Lord, they are nothing but a bunch of liars. They do cartwheels to get our attention and, oh, how they love to look into the TV cameras and preen at anything that moves.

God of the weak and weakened, I pray for strength to resist their packaged lies. Give me the spontaneity to shut my eyes and ears every once in a while. Give me the quickness in deleting their lies in texted messages and junk e-mail. Give me the daring to spit on their eyes and throw urine on their scalps even if it's only in my mind.

Rescue me from the new faces. Rescue me from the newcomers who flaunt their facility with language. Rescue me from those who think serving means stealing a little for themselves to make up for what they have spent to get to where they are. Rescue me from those who think everybody steals, cheats and lies except them. Rescue me too from those who really stole, cheated and lied. You know who they are, you know who helped them.

Make them blind so they will not see themselves on TV, let their loins be stricken with palsy. Pour out your fury upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them. Make their camp desolate and let no one dwell in their tents.

I myself am wounded and weak. Let your mercy envelop me so that I may be protected from the wolves in signature clothing.

I will praise your name, O God, with songs and poems and prose. I will glorify your goodness with my honest vote and decisions. This will please you, O Yahweh, more than the hundreds of charity projects that bear their names.

For you, Lord, hear the confused and the needy and the faint of heart.

Let the heavens be glad, the earth bloom, the seas dance. All the living creatures praise you. For you will save us, you will rebuild our cities and villages. You will provide jobs and just wages to the unemployed. You will give the landless a piece of this planet and the wretched of the earth a share of the earth's bounty.

You will help your people survive all this insanity. The just and honest will triumph and those who hearken to your word and obey your laws will inherit the land.

* * *

Sr. Esperanza Quirino of the Religious of the Good Shepherd, known from north to south as Sr. Parang, was laid to rest last Tuesday. She was 79. She was the older sister of the famous late TV host and entertainment writer JQ, by the way, and, oh, what disparate worlds they moved in. Beloved by so many, this peripatetic "bag lady" (as Bishop Chito Tagle fondly called her) indeed died with her sandals on. I had thought she might go in that manner, *pupulutin na lang sa lupa ng kung sino* (picked up from the ground by strangers) and I did worry about what people might find in her tattered bag.

Well, Sr. Parang did suddenly slump to the ground while walking home alone last Friday. Her beloved earth caught her and gave her a loving embrace. It was right and fitting for she was into environmental work, justice for the poor, and 101 other concerns. The poor she loved and worked with in Cavite found her and carried her in their arms. They ministered to her until, several hours later, she breathed her last and rendezvoused with her Shepherd God.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

In the line of duty

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

WHEN PRESIDENT DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL commissioned Guillermo Tolentino to sculpt the busts of Filipino heroes for the newly renamed Heroes Hall (previously the Social Hall), among the heroes chosen was Jose Abad Santos. Today, Abad Santos is commemorated on the P1,000-bill along with two other martyrs of the Japanese Occupation, Josefa Llanes Escoda and Gen. Vicente Lim. While officially, homage continues to be given to Abad Santos, the anniversary of his capture by the Japanese on April 10, 1942 and his execution on May 2 of that year are largely ignored and the importance of the man is only vaguely understood.

Abad Santos was captured by the Japanese near Carcar, Cebu. He was interrogated for three weeks, and asked to contact soldiers who hadn't surrendered and to renounce his allegiance to the United States and the Philippines. He refused, saying: "I cannot accede to the things you ask of me. To obey your commands is tantamount to being a traitor to the United States and my country. I would prefer to die rather than live in shame."

Abad Santos was brought to Parang, Cotabato, and then to Malabang, Lanao del Sur, where he was told he would be executed. When his son burst into tears upon being told this, Abad Santos said, "Do not cry Pepito. Show these people that you are brave. It is a rare opportunity far me to die for our country. Not everybody is given that chance."

At two o' clock in the afternoon of May 2, 1942, he was executed. His remains have never been found.

Present-day Filipinos, who have grown up free, find it difficult to understand how exactly Abad Santos became a Filipino hero when he died as much out of loyalty to the United States as to his country. After all, with an official history that accepts both the Second Republic established by the Japanese and the Commonwealth that continued in exile, who can say either side was good or nobler than the other?

The answer was given by Jose P. Laurel himself, who justified his assumption of a de facto presidency out of loyalty to the de jure leadership of the country. In a private discussion on Jan. 6, 1944, Laurel reminisced about events that occurred in December 1941: "I still recall those last Cabinet meetings in Marikina. We were there under the mango tree near the air-raid shelter. Don Manuel put up before the Cabinet the order he just received from Washington commanding him to go to Corregidor.

"In justice to him, I want to say that the President didn't want to leave. But it was us, the Cabinet, including me, that influenced him. I still remember him saying, 'Laurel, write my letter and explain why I should not go.' And I wrote that the people would not understand the President's act of leaving for Corregidor during a crucial period. It would be like running away, I wrote. The same thing that is being said of him now.

"But finally, the decision was made that he should go. Then he informed us ... that he would also take me along. I was ready to go...

"Finally at the last minute, the President changed his mind and said he would bring Jose Abad Santos instead. 'You Laurel,' he said, 'are influential with the Japanese. They have given you a doctorate. So, stay and help Jorge [Vargas].'

"And so I stayed..."

Laurel also wrote in his prison memoirs that it could just as easily have been him in Abad Santos' shoes and that he would have appreciated the chance to die gloriously for his country more than endure the painful duty of being an occupation president.

Why Abad Santos chose to die might best be understood by recalling the responsibilities he held at the time of his capture. He was more than chief justice and concurrent justice secretary (because of the emergency powers act which gave Quezon quasi-legislative emergency powers passed by the Philippine legislature after the Japanese attack). Abad Santos had also been designated the representative of the President of the Philippines in unoccupied territory. To show that he was indeed the representative of the President, up to the time he was captured, he would ride in a car bearing license plate No. 1. Thus, for Abad Santos to order Filipino soldiers still resisting to surrender would have carried the moral, if not political weight, of the commander in chief who had delegated to him the powers of his office. Any overt cooperation with the Japanese would also have been tantamount to the surrender of the Commonwealth government. At the very least, the harm to the country's cause would have been magnified beyond the actual reality of the capture of a chief justice. Abad Santos saw this clearly, and to the end, he did his duty without flinching or displaying any anxiety.

There is a line of civilian martyrs in our modern nationhood: Jose Rizal, Jose Abad Santos, Ninoy Aquino. Writing of Ninoy, the late Teodoro M. Locsin Sr. reflected on Abad Santos' example:

"Here is a mystery of human nature that defies solution while humbling us. Evil we know, and understand, knowing our nature. But good is something else. As martyrdom, it has had, history shows, a fascination for some. The cynic would say it is mere inflation of the ego. But how explain the slow martyrdom of Damien who lived among lepers, ministering to their needs, and finding a mystical fulfillment when he could say: 'We lepers.' Ego-inflation still? If that is the supreme desire, then the cynic might try life in a leper colony. He should never think more highly of himself then. But cynicism is only fear—fear of knowing what one is. To debase the good is to rise in self-estimation. If all men are vile, then you are not worse than you might think you are. You just know the human score. To face and recognize goodness is to sit in judgment on oneself. Avoid it."

Lent

YOUNG BLOOD

Chris Daniel Loza

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I SAW MY YOUNGER—AND ONLY—BROTHER DIE TWICE.

The first time was when he was 4, and I was 10. After convulsing madly, with black ants coming out of his nails, he went into a coma. He was given 24 hours to get out of it or he never would. After all my hysterics inside the hospital room—jumping, wailing, puking—I was sent out. He was left alone inside to recover or die. That was on March 5, 1993.

Our years together had been typical of brothers, punctuated by fighting, punching and kicking each other. I had asked for him, wished for him, prayed to the Almighty that I would have a sibling. But I never was appreciative of him during our early years together. I cared for him, but I did not know how to show it. So he was being taken away from me. That quickly, that suddenly.

Out of the hospital room, with a glass window between us, I promised God that if He would let Bryan Nathaniel live, I would care for him the best way I could—perhaps even more than I could. I'd do anything and everything just so he'd live. It was a prayer, a bargain. And God heard and granted it.

Twelve years later, last year, Bryan was a freshman in college and I was fresh out of college. I decided not to work immediately so I could have the time to ease Bryan into the fast-paced life in Metro Manila. He seemed so precocious but at the same time so innocent, even child-like, although he was turning 17 that September. We bonded really well. We shared the same passion for books and movies. We went on book-shopping sprees, watched movies and DVDs, ate pizzas and pastas and bought Christmas gifts together for our family and relatives in Bicol. That was what I wanted: to be with my brother and see him grow.

Last Feb. 28, we were together—me, him and Mom—for an event at which I was being awarded a prize. I treated them to coffee and pasta and shared part of my prize with them.

Mom went back to Bicol that same night. The next morning, Bryan left early to hear Ash Wednesday Mass.

He never reached the church. He was hit by a passenger jeepney while he was on the way there. And the driver and his passengers didn't care at all. People who witnessed the accident simply stood there and looked, and then just walked away, as if it were a cat that had been hit. It took some time before someone picked him up from the street, bloodied and hardly breathing, and took him to the nearest hospital.

I got the call while I was on my way to work. I saw Bryan in the emergency room with doctors and nurses around him. Just two nights earlier, we were making plans for the weekend. Just that morning, we said goodbye to each other. Now he was there, in the emergency room, unconscious. And I was trying to control my shaking.

I had to call mother who had just arrived in Bicol. I had to inform a father in Saudi Arabia who was still asleep, perhaps dreaming that one week later he'd be home for good and we'd all be together, finally.

My eyes were focused on my brother. The doctors' words and everyone else's faded into the background. I was alone. The only familiar face in that room, in that hospital, was dying. I held his feet. I looked at the monitor, which was showing his heartbeat growing weaker. At 7:50 a.m., Bryan was pronounced dead.

There seemed to be a rift, a rupture in time, between Feb. 28 and March 1. It seemed that the only continuity was time itself and that the events were disparate and disjointed. How does one go from being alive one second and dead the next?

I remembered March 1993, the pleas, the prayers that he would live and that I would have another chance to take care of him.

I had that chance. In my imperfect and flawed way, I had loved and cared for Bryan. And God saw that I had fulfilled my promise. He took Bryan at a most difficult time, when he was battling the demons of youth. But He took him also at an opportune moment, when he had made the decision, an affirmation of faith, to hear early Mass on Ash Wednesday. He was taken in the most painful way, and yet God, in doing so, preserved Bryan's child-like and happy nature.

It was physically painful for Bryan and it was emotionally gut-wrenching and shocking for us whom he left behind. But there is that hope, that faith that Bryan is in better hands now. In the loving arms of Mama Mary, as my Mom keeps telling me.

It has been a long and surreal Lent for us and a different and melancholic future lies ahead. There are the happy memories to summon and then there are the images at the hospital, at the morgue, at the funeral house. There are those he left behind: the children to whom he was teaching Catechism in Bicol, his family, his relatives and his friends. His death has to mean something, although what it is isn't clear to me yet. Eyes blurred by tears and hearts filled by sorrow cannot have a clear vision of what lies ahead. We just limp forward to some unknown future. We look back and we look forward. We look outward and we look inward.

Where do we find the strength to move on? In God. In Mary.

I look forward to Black Saturday and to Easter Sunday, when this Lenten Season will end. I look forward to the new light after this utter darkness because I believe not only in the Suffering Christ, but more so in the Resurrected Christ.

Chris Daniel Loza, 23, graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University last March 2005 with a major in Electronics and Communications Engineering and a minor in Philosophy. He is on leave from work in an engineering company.

THEY SAID

Constructive selectivity

"Management says it's their prerogative to cancel programs that are not constructive. So that means issues like wage increases and increases in electrical bills are not constructive for them. But it's constructive for all."

—Bernie Ramos, host of the axed dzRJ radio program, "Buhay Manggagawa," which is critical of the Arroyo administration

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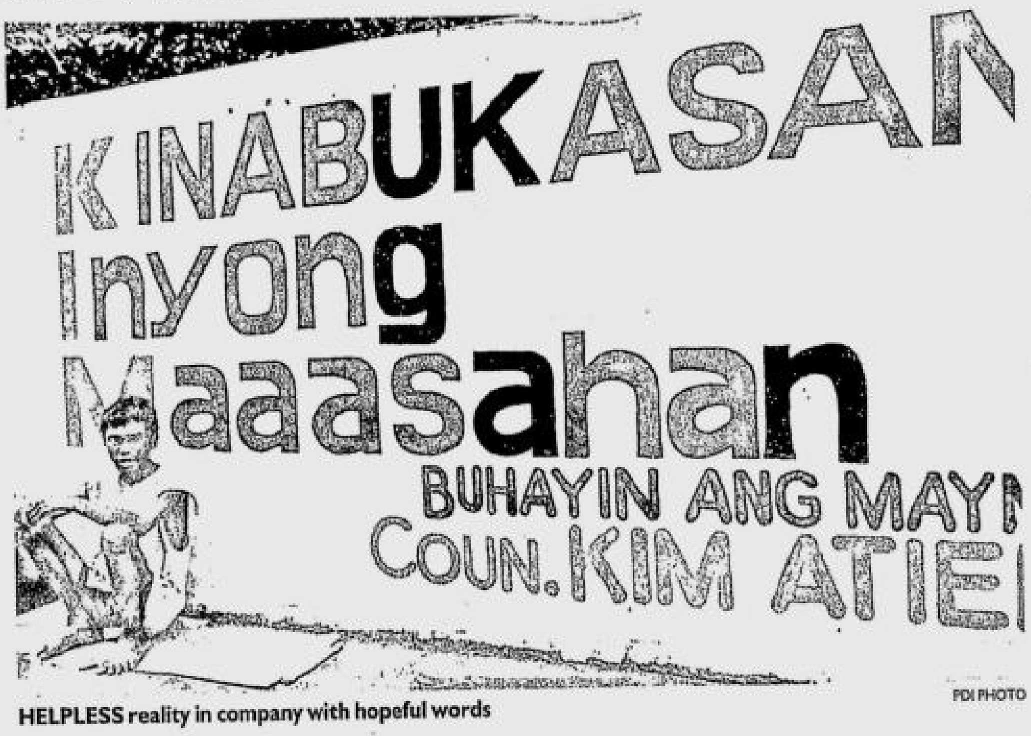

PDI PHOTO

HELPLESS reality in company with hopeful words

Just a little more, O God of truth

O GOD OF TRUTH, JUSTICE AND freedom, we come to You in this moment of deep need.

We have tried so hard, sacrificed so much yet so little seems to change.

We are not only poor but miserable. We are not only jobless but prostituted.

We are not only harassed but arrested and tortured on false charges.

We are not only told to keep quiet but fed what to think and say.

We are not only deceived but forced to believe that it is You who are responsible for all these, for "You put her here."

As a result, many of our institutions are compromised, their leaders and managers seem to have become mere functionaries willing to parrot the official line.

Many of us used to look to spiritual leaders for guidance and inspiration, but many of them have suddenly become distant and unwilling to walk the muddy and pebble-strewn path of justice and truth.

There is little to expect from businessmen for we know too well what many of them are interested in.

There is little to expect from the military men for many of them have learned how to benefit from a 41-year-old practice of "promotion for devotion."

Last but not the least, there is nothing to expect from old and recycled politicians who try so hard to pretend that they champion the people's cause by promising heaven to us. How can heaven come from those who give us hell?

We are indeed tired, hungry and angry. Many are on the verge of giving up. Some have altogether left and are planning to leave for good. Many are cynical and do not trust anyone anymore.

Teach us to trust just a little more. Teach us to believe and open our eyes to see that something good, true and worthwhile is happening. Teach us to appreciate what others do and will continue to do in spite of the many risks. Teach us to see how even our daily efforts to work, feed our children and pay the bills are not wasted and irrelevant. Teach us to offer our sacrifices, big or small as sincere and genuine prayers for change and freedom.

You ask just a little more from us...a little more faith, a little more love, a little more sacrifice for our country and, most especially, the poor. Yes Lord, it is not much, just... a little more. Amen.

—FR. ROBERTO P. REYES

Cha-cha looks self-serving, manipulative and deceitful

TO SHOW THAT THEY SINCERELY believe Charter change is best for the nation and to assure the rest of the Filipinos that those who have lent their signatures to the people's initiative on Cha-cha were properly apprised of the issues before they signed, the Cha-cha proponents—Secretary Mike Defensor, in behalf of the Office of the President, and Speaker Jose de Venecia—should enlighten the rest of the public on the proposed shift from the presidential to parliamentary system by answering the following questions:

1. What problems does the shift aim to solve?
2. What are the roots of these problems?
3. How will the parliamentary system solve both the problems and causes? What is in the parliamentary system that will make it succeed where the presidential system failed?
4. How will the Cha-cha advocates address the potential evils of the parliamentary system once the power to change the nation's highest officials is lodged no longer on the people but on the highest officials themselves, in their capacity as concurrent executive and legislative officials? Without term limits, they can more easily ensure their continued stay in power, protecting each other's back, with the safe support of their appointees (over the years they are in power) in the military and police, in the Commission on Elections, Commission on Audit, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the judiciary.

If one of the causes of national disunity is the abuse of power by our top executive officials, can this be solved by allowing them, under a new Constitution, to control at the same time the legislative powers of the government?

Unless the principal Cha-cha proponents are able to fully and satisfactorily answer these questions, it will appear that their advocacy is self-serving, manipulative and deceitful.

—MARCELO L. TECSON,
martecson@yahoo.com

A gov't arm makes an imprint with its courage and creativity

THE NEWS ITEM, "GOV'T PRINTING office slashes costs by half" (PDI, 3/29/06), to my mind, provided the balance to a series of adverse stories questioning the President's prerogative to appoint those she feels capable of delivering the goods, so to speak, including former military officers.

Being a retired government employee myself, I think all the questions about this issue are simply politically motivated. Since time immemorial, no one has questioned the appointing power of a sitting president, especially in relation to low-level positions that do not require legislative concurrence.

Having said that, we commend the National Printing Office for cutting by 48 percent the purchase price of its paper. This is an unprecedented feat as far as that agency is concerned, and it must have taken a lot of courage and creative management savvy to achieve it. The Arroyo administration must come up with this kind of achievements and news stories if it wishes to turn the tide of public opinion in its favor.

I know there are so many positive stories about this administration, which are not being published or given the media mileage they deserve. It's high time the media made a more objective appraisal of the accomplishments of the present administration.

—LAWRENCE MAGPANTAY,
magpantay_10@yahoo.com

Not necessarily non-taxpayers and power-hungry politicians

IN REFERENCE TO THE LETTER of Ronald Rodriguez (PDI, 4/5/06), how can he be so sure that all 65 percent of those who want Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to quit are "the non-taxpayers, power-hungry politicians, turncoats and deposed presidents and ex-presidents who have nothing better to do"?

Did he run a survey of his own? He said that he has left the country. Is he himself a Filipino non-taxpayer? Also, how does he justify his demand that "everybody just cooperate with whoever is at the helm now"?

With the issue of GMA's legitimacy (or illegitimacy) unresolved, we are not sure who is the rightful person who should be at the helm. Besides, how can he cooperate if he has left the country? My guess is he treats this country as a mere cost center content with foreign remittance.

—EDWIN CAPILI,
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Erratum

In the April 11 issue of the INQUIRER, the line "since that money is plowed back into health systems"—in the Commentary "Mandatory service," by Cielito C. Goño (Page A11)—should have read "since that money is not plowed back ...." Our apologies.—Ed.

LETTERS

Why was the letter addressed to GMA?

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE BANNER story of the INQUIRER's April 2 issue, headlined "Meralco monopoly is over," brought me a sense of immediate relief. As a consumer, I have been looking forward to the start of competition in the electricity industry, expecting this to provide the needed momentum for the structural reforms embodied in the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) and thus, lower our power rates in the country.

But on second thought, I could not help asking myself: Why should Meralco be writing to President Macapagal-Arroyo when it is the Energy Regulatory Commission that is tasked to set the rules and mechanism for open competition? And Meralco knows this fully well, which led me to another question: Could there be a trade-off behind this offer?

I hope the trade-off would not be the approval of the P20-billion Napocor-Meralco Settlement Agreement pending before the ERC. The agreement intends to pass on to the consumers Meralco's penalty for reneging on its contract with Napocor.

I hope it would not be a government waiver of the P42 billion that Meralco owes the Napocor.

I hope it would not be a higher Meralco off-take from its IPPs, which would spell more Napocor losses that will be passed on to consumers.

Besides, Meralco knows fully well that before the ERC can allow open access and retail competition under the law, two more conditions have to be complied with: the privatization of at least 70 percent of Napocor assets in Luzon and in the Visayas; and the transfer of the management and control to the IPPs of at least 70 percent of the total energy output of power plants under contract with Napocor. And Meralco, as much as all the other industry players, is aware of this.

So, what was Meralco cooking up in writing the President and in telling her that it will open up its market to retail suppliers of electricity to allow competition? I hope it was not meant to treat electricity consumers and prospective buyers of Napocor assets to another dish of fallacy.

—PETE L. ILAGAN,
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Consumers for Reforms Inc.,
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'A Third Look at Mining'

FR. CARLOS ABESAMIS, S.J. wrote a book: "A Third Look at Jesus." The first look, he explains, was the way Jesus understood himself. The second look at Jesus was how the Graeco-Roman and Western eyes later regarded Him. The third look is the look at Jesus by the poor, oppressed and awakened selfless poor in the Third World.

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan calls the "parable" told by Eulalio "Euls" Austin Jr., Philex vice president for mining operations, "A Parable for our Time." (PDI, 2/18/06)

Inspired by Father Abesamis' "A Third Look at Jesus," I've got this thought of "A Third Look at Mining."

The first look at mining is the way Philex looks at its exploration of the natural resources in the Philippines, as explained in a parable by Austin. Exciting in all its phases, with the prospect of gold for many years to come.

The second look is the way government, politicians, law enforcers and well-to-do people regard mining. It helps raise the cash badly needed by the government and provides additional "sweeteners" for politicians, law-enforcers and the rich.

A third look is that of the workers in the mining industries, that of the indigenous people, the tribal groups that have been struggling for centuries to preserve their ancestral lands, and questioning the moral of Austin's story—"better times are sure to come sooner or later."

What surely has come for mining workers are weak lungs, tuberculosis, greater poverty and an uncertain future. For the indigenous people, what has come are poisoned rivers that can no longer give them fish for their meals, as well as water for drinking and for irrigating rice lands.

The way it looks now, all that will be left for the future generations of Filipinos is a country stripped bare of its natural resources.

Fr. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., a well known Filipino historian, is said to have traveled in the 1960s by plane from Hong Kong to Melbourne, Australia. During the flight, a passenger beside him asked what it was that he was seeing down in the sea.

Father De la Costa answered: "Ah, that mud spot? That was 50 years ago the Pearl of the Orient, my country, the Philippines."

I think that Cunanan, whose columns in the INQUIRER I highly appreciate, is aware of the fact that the interpretation of a parable depends on "which side of the fence you are."

—FR. BERNARD
ROOSENDAAL, O.CARM.,
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Iron hands for opponents, deaf ear for everyone else

IF THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION can quickly put in detention its political opponents, alleged coup plotters and the so-called rebellious elements in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, why isn't it as committed to responding to pleas for justice coming from ordinary citizens?

The Department of Justice has not shown any solid evidence to pin down the Batasan 5 and Rep. Crispin Beltran who have made popular the line, "to be an enemy of GMA is a badge of honor," but one is now in jail and the others are threatened with arrest.

On the other hand, the Commission on Human Rights, after a year-long investigation, has come up with impregnable evidence—sworn affidavits, photos and medico-legal documents—on the hostage-taking in, and the ensuing siege of, Camp Bagong Diwa. Risking the ire of the government and law enforcement agencies, the CHR has concluded that the slain Moro inmates were summarily executed during the siege.

It has therefore recommended that the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Philippine National Police be held criminally and administratively accountable for the deaths of the inmates.

Why is Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo silent on this matter?

We have seen her readily vow to let the "full force of the law" fall on her political opponents and the rebel soldiers, but we haven't heard anything from her about the "full force of the law" to be made to bear upon those who summarily executed the Moro detainees. Why aren't we hearing her say that those found guilty of that massacre will be meted out with their just punishment?

And why is the Arroyo administration turning a deaf ear to its very own human rights commission? It does say something about GMA's low regard for democracy and human rights. But we are still hoping that the families of the slain Moro detainees will get justice.

—JEFFERSON BALISTOY,
Liga ng Kabataan Moro-
Metro Manila (LKM),
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Barangay Culiat, Tandang Sora,
Quezon City

The passion of the Filipino

COMMENTARY

John J. Carroll, S.J.
Institute on Church and Social Issues

IN THE ACCOUNT OF THE TRIAL BEFORE Pontius Pilate, which we read in the liturgy on Good Friday, Pilate believes that he is judging Christ. Yet, as he asks "What is truth?"—even as the "the way, the truth and the life" stands before him—one realizes that in fact Pilate is judging himself before hundreds of millions of readers down through history and—more importantly—before the God of history.

Truth is a key concept in the Gospel of John, beginning with the Prologue in which Christ is spoken of as "the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." Scholars have argued that Christ as "the truth" primarily refers not to the truth about God but to God's truth about man. He is the ideal human being, our model, who embodies all that the Father wants and expects of us because He is, in St. Paul's phrase "the image of the unseen God."

Pope John Paul II put great emphasis on the role of truth in both public and private life. He did not confine truth to mere accuracy with regard to facts, although this is crucial. Like the author of John's Gospel, he saw truth as a call, a vocation, an invitation to the human person and to society to be the best that they can be. He spoke explicitly of the role of truth in the political order, telling us in the encyclical "Centesimus Annus" (#44) that "If there is no transcendent truth, in obedience to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people."

Today, the Philippines is in the midst of a crisis which is described as political, but which deep down is really a crisis of truth. Even the most elementary form of truth, respect for facts, is flagrantly disregarded in the struggle to gain or retain political power. We have seen this in the case of the "Hello Garci" tapes, the gag order forbidding public officials to testify before Congress, the fertilizer scam and now the "people's initiative."

Just as counterfeit money drives out good money, making people distrust all money, so do the peddling of untruths and the efforts to hide the facts, for the latter create an atmosphere of distrust and cynicism, making rational argument and civil debate impossible, and corroding confidence in the institutions of society.

The corrosion of confidence in the nation's key institutions began with Congress, many of whose members voted to impeach then Chief Justice Hilario Davide, probably the most respected man in public life; its members recently voted each of them an additional P20 million in pork barrel funds; and now they plan to rewrite the Constitution to suit themselves. The corrosion has spread to the Commission on Elections and to the Office of the Ombudsman. It is now even threatening the Supreme Court.

Interestingly, Archbishop Angel N. Lagdameo spoke along these same lines to the graduates of the Colegio del Sagrado Corazon in Iloilo, even before issuing his recent statement on the "people's Initiative." To the graduates he said, "We find it difficult to believe in one another or to believe in our leaders .... When a leader says one thing and acts differently from what he had said he would do, that is a failure of credibility."

Again and most recently, writing as president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Archbishop Lagdameo warned the faithful about the lack of credibility—perhaps, honesty would be a better word—in the current signature campaign claiming to be a people's initiative. He first noted that a major shift in the form of government "requires widest participation, total transparency and relative serenity that allows for rational discussion and debate," and that the hasty collection of signatures currently going on in no way provides for this kind of discussion. Secondly, he argued that the reasons for constitutional change must be based on the common good, meaning, "principled politics, transparency, accountability, electoral and institutional reform, and more efficient delivery of services to the people, especially the poorest"; and that there is no clarity as to how the proposed changes will bring these about. Which led him to wonder about the real motives of those proposing these changes, who in fact seem to be the ones most likely to benefit from the changes.

The archbishop then called on the faithful to reflect seriously on what he had said, to pray over it and "[i]f before God speaking in conscience, you agree ... to discern the appropriate actions .... Vigilance, education, principled opposition may be necessary steps to take."

Here, it is to be noted, he spoke as a moral guide within the Christian community and not above it. He did not call for any specific action but left the ultimate decision to individuals facing the issues in their own consciences. And then, he asked them to unite in whatever action they decide upon, before the Lord.

And so each Filipino—as he accompanies the Lord through His Passion—experiences the passion of the Filipino nation; a nation that deserves far better than it has received from its leaders is seeking the truth beyond its many distortions and is asking for divine guidance. He does so with the assurance that Good Friday will ultimately be followed by an Easter Sunday. For at the center of it all is a God of love who is more powerful than the mystery of evil.

And finally truth will triumph over falsehood, good over evil, life over death.

Move to split ARMM gains more enemies

COTABATO CITY—OPPOSITION is growing to a proposed law that would create one more Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) out of the original.

House Bill 5369, filed on March 15 by Representatives Gerry Salapuddin of Basilan, Hussin Amin of Sulu and Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas, proposes to create one more ARMM out of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan in Western Mindanao.

It seeks to leave the original ARMM in Central Mindanao to Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Marawi City.

The three congressmen cited in their bill Moro inhabitants in that western part of Mindanao as having a distinct culture and tradition, and are a "people apart" from their Muslim counterparts in Lanao and Maguindanao as basis to advance the move to divide the ARMM.

"There must be a justifiable reason," said Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong, who admitted that he only learned about the proposal to divide ARMM in the newspapers.

"I thought we are for expanding ARMM, how come we have this strange diminishing idea?" Loong asked.

Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar insisted that "there must be valid grounds beneficial to the inhabitants."

"Will this promote unity and development and better than the present system (political structure)?" asked Akbar, who said that he believes that in the end, the people have to decide on it.

Earlier opposition came from ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan, who considered the House move as "divisive and counter-productive."

Lanao del Sur Gov. Bashir Manalao reinforced Ampatuan's position citing the old popular belief that "in union there is strength is still very much at work in this case."

Manalao stressed the importance of keeping a single, solid ARMM, which is believed to be a strong leverage factor to reckon with.

Mayor Benjie Bagul, president of the League of Municipalities in the ARMM, proposed to conduct public consultations to find out the sentiments of the people.

Bagul, the mayor of Balindong, Lanao del Sur, said at the outset he is "very much against the proposal to divide the region."

In the past, rampant corruption in the ARMM prompted some cause-oriented Moro groups to rally for their respective provinces to severe ties with the government-engineered Muslim autonomy.

Ampatuan assured that under his stewardship "public funds should redound to public welfare."

He reminded ARMM cabinet officials to adhere to the policy of transparency and accountability at all times. *Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Hundreds climb Luzon's highest peak in the dark

RP'S 2ND HIGHEST PEAK: Encroachment by upland farmers into the 11,550-hectare national park threatens the protected area around Mount Pulog, the second highest mountain in the country and the habitat of dozens of endangered species. Pine trees now coexist with vegetable farmers. AFP

From page A14

But trouble is brewing in paradise as farmers, some of them migrants, push higher up in the slopes in search of new areas to cultivate.

This is bad news to dozens of endangered species, many of them endemic to Pulog, including six types of giant cloud rats.

"For the environment, the indications are not okay," says Tamiray. The park can only afford four forest rangers to protect their habitat.

Pine trees coexist uneasily with vegetable farmers on the lower slopes, with moss—and fern—cloaked trees higher up. Past 8,530 feet only dwarf bamboo and scraggly weeds survive the thin air.

The basic route is a mostly leisurely, 3.5-hour trek with a day pack from a forest ranger station located at 7,500 feet, linked by a dirt track to the main highway in the town of Kabayan on the valley floor 12 kilometers away.

To reach the summit before daybreak, climbers walk single file under the pale moon past potato and sweet pea farms irrigated by mountain springs and then cut across the mossy forest.

Sacred peak

The mountain folk of the region consider Pulog a sacred peak, and trekkers suffer or enjoy the climb in silence out of respect for the locals' traditions.

Other routes cover much longer distances and offer increasing degrees of difficulty. Climbers haul up to a third of their body weight behind their backs for food, tents, thermal clothing and other essentials for up to four days in the rough.

Tamiray accuses some local officials of helping migrants obtain land titles to parts of the protected area, which allow them to fell trees, degrading Luzon's main watershed.

Cabbage patches

Fourteen hamlets now encroach on the park, felling trees to clear land for farming. Tamiray does not rule out the possibility that future climbers of Pulog will see cabbage patches up to the summit.

"It's possible, if the communities are not cooperating," she says. "Political will is needed at the local government level."

The transformation from forestry to farmland is a process now under way at the base of Mount Tabayoc, about 10 km north of Pulog, where two backhoes are completing the work begun by settlers who set fire to a patch of forest around a mountain lake.

Two water buffaloes wallow on the edge of the water, beside a clump of 10 tents pitched by a group preparing to climb the mountain.

Prospects of ruin

The distant, high-pitched roar of chainsaws is audible as Picache leads the team up a steep, lung-busting obstacle course of tree trunks, roots and rocks, most of them covered in moist, slippery green moss.

First-time climber Clarissa Katigbak, who helps run a family-owned real estate firm on workdays and races offroad vehicles on weekends, says the prospect of the peak being ruined made her trek more urgent.

"It's one good incentive to climb the mountain now, before everything disappears," she says. *AFP*

Palawan town mayor denies kidnap report of 11 persons

CORON, PALAWAN—LOCAL Authorities here have expressed alarm over news report of 11 persons alleged to have been kidnapped by pirates and taken to Tara Island in Coron in northern Palawan.

Mayor Mario T. Reyes Jr. of Coron has vehemently denied the reported kidnapping of eight employees of M-4 Construction and Maintenance Services, contractor of Smart Communications in Coron, and the three-man crew of the boat.

Senior Insp. Erwin A. Ogoc, Chief of Police-Coron, PO3 Robert Calica of the Philippine Coast Guard, and Tara barangay captain Abelardo Aguido also said the report is not true.

Aguido said Tara island is inhabited by Tagbanuas who would not conceal information if they see any suspicious movements or presence of strangers in their area."

The local officials believed that the boat, which left San Jose, Occidental Mindoro for Coron, had capsized along the way due to big waves caused by bad weather. Units of the police, Coast Guard and Task Force Malampaya are conducting search and rescue operation for the missing persons.

According to reports, the unregistered and unnamed boat owned by certain Cesar Abiera Jr. left Caminawit, San Jose at dawn on March 31, 2006. Aboard were Engr. Arvin Dalisay, Ruelito Javier, Ruel Magtibay, Russel Claveria, Ben Velasquez, Manolito Velasquez, Reynaldo Monterey, Renato Glimar and three crew members Lauro Malibiran, Roque Malibiran and one unnamed person.

Magic of Ali's name, image . . .

From page A14

fortune in advertising and marketing deals with Ali. Ali's famous boxing opponent, George Foreman, has been successful as a celebrity product endorser. (His George Foreman grills were so popular that the company manufacturing them, Salton, decided to buy Foreman out for $137.5 million in 1999 rather than keep paying him royalties from sales.)

Sillerman said it would be premature to discuss how the company would use Ali's name and likeness, but whatever his company did would be "respectful, methodical and impactful."

"It is not our plan to involve him in any way personally," Sillerman said of Ali, who is suffering from Parkinson's disease.

Underused brand

Ali, 64, joins other names under Sillerman's control that have one thing in common: They are instantly recognized around the world. But CKX also has an eye for big names that are not making big money. When CKX acquired a controlling interest in Presley's name in 2005, the company that controlled the estate, Elvis Presley Enterprises, was bringing in about $40 million in annual revenues for the last five years. Sillerman says he believes that, like Presley, Ali is an underused brand. In the last five years, Ali's name, image and likeness have generated approximately $7 million in revenue, CKX said in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

After five years, Ali has the right to force CKX to buy the remaining 20 percent share of the company at fair market value, according to the SEC filing.

"When we created CKX and came up with the idea for it, we came up with three things that we thought had the greatest impact on American culture," Sillerman said in an interview Tuesday. He has now acquired all three: Presley, "American Idol" and Ali.

New York Times News Service

REHEARSALS!
Before the throng of foreign and local tourists descend upon the stage, children play "jumping cross." Their elders, the stars of the spectacle, will shed blood, sweat and tears before Good Friday ends. Just like last year and the year before last. EDWIN BACASMAS

Cherry blossom tree blooms in artist's front yard

From page A14

seedlings from the Bureau of Plant Industry. In my own research, the seeds most probably came from Davao, where the Japanese planted many cherry trees during their occupation of the Philippines from May 1942 until July 1945.

This year 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan.

It is widely known that the sakura are very dear to the hearts of the Japanese people. The 1200-year-old practice of *hanani* or "flower viewing" in Japan—coinciding with the onset of spring from late March to early April—began in the Heian Period (794-1185 A.D.) when it became popular among the aristocracy. Men and women of the ruling class dressed in their finest kimonos, brought boxed lunches, plenty of sake and gathered under the cherry blossom trees to eat, drink, exchange stories and gossip, and compose poetry.

It was only in the Edo Period (1600-1868) that hanani began to spread to the lower classes.

The cherry blossom trees bloom for about five days. After which they quickly fall to the ground and rot—a reminder that youth, beauty and happiness are temporary and that we should live a full life on the time allotted us on earth.

Symbol of samurai

Cherry blossoms symbolized the life and code of the samurai who died in the prime of their lives to uphold their duties to their masters.

Our 18-year-old sakura tree is like a girl making a debut. It blooms for two weeks as it adapts to the Philippine weather. Every year, it blooms with unceasing regularity and my neighbors would gape, mesmerized by its multitude of flowers.

Divinely designed

I can hardly see the branches that seem to stagger under the weight of all the flowers that look like clouds. Or, maybe like blankets of snow. Those that fall on our rooftops resemble bits of wads of tissue paper. The overall atmosphere the blooming tree creates is complete serenity and harmony with nature. It can only be designed by the divine.

Where in the world is Fr. Robert?

From page A14

events unfold in the Philippines from afar.

Curiously, Reyes celebrated his 51st birthday on Feb. 24, the day that President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of national emergency.

"This is something that is between me and God," Raval quoted Reyes as saying in one of his letters. "He is processing some things within himself."

In an e-mail forwarded to the INQUIRER, Reyes said that in time he would "tell more."

"For now ... I am (still) part of the People's struggle for Truth, Justice and Freedom ... in my own quiet and hidden way," Reyes said.

He asked that his exact location not be revealed.

Motherland in his heart

"What is important is that I'm very much alive and very deeply connected to the motherland and to the people who have been part of my heart, mind and soul," he said.

Perhaps indicating that his departure was less than happy, some associates interviewed for this article refused to speak on record.

They painted a picture of a man who, before he left, was increasingly facing tremendous pressure from within and outside the church.

Political advocacies

Within the church, there had been criticism that he was neglecting his flock at the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal because he was too busy doing his political advocacies—a criticism his supporters said was unfounded.

One associate said there were concerns that he was spending more time at Kubol, the community he founded at the foot of the People Power Monument on Edsa at the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal, than in his parish.

Reyes told the INQUIRER at the time he was holding a protest fast last year that he never set aside his pastoral duties, and that while he slept and prayed in the tent on Edsa, he had been at his church every morning to say Mass, baptize, hear confessions and administer to his parishioners.

"I never reneged on my responsibilities in my parish," Reyes had said in another interview.

"There was clearly a discussion among his peers about what he was doing (outside the parish)," the associate said.

People close to Reyes said he was offered a choice by his superiors to "be a parish priest or do advocacy."

Outside the church, there were differences between Reyes and some members of the Kubol community.

Asked to leave?

One insider said Reyes was asked to leave because he was alienating allies with his fierce commentaries, whatever the subject or object was.

Reyes first came to national prominence when he began running to promote his advocacies. He had more than once criticized leaders of the Catholic Church for their perceived neutrality in what for him were matters of immediate importance.

Known as the "running priest," he soon found himself at the forefront of political actions as well as in front of the camera, juggling his priestly and non-priestly duties.

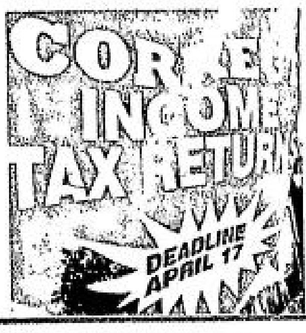
Back home

Two years ago, he was transferred from the Parish of the Holy Sacrifice at the University of the Philippines in Diliman to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish in Project 4.

This January, he was moved out of his second parish in a reshuffle and he moved back to his parents' home north of Metro Manila.

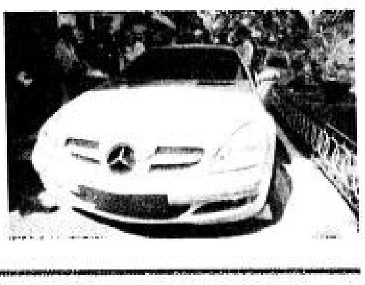
"I'm 50, single and I'm back at my parents' place," he had joked then.

Reached for an interview, Nicanor Perlas, one of the leaders of Kubol, would only confirm that there had been "differences" in strategy between Reyes and the others.



■ NEWS / A6
Scene stealers, a pictorial: How to keep holy the Holy Week

■ NEWS / A7
P4.5-M silver gray 2-door Mercedes reported stolen was sold, say cops



Where in the world is Fr. Robert?

By Luige A. del Puerto

IF THERE'S NO PRIEST SAYING MASS AT THE FOOT OF THE PEOple Power Monument on Edsa, where's Father Robert Reyes?

Reyes, one of the country's most outspoken critics of the Arroyo administration, has gone on a sabbatical and is believed to be out of the country.

PDI PHOTO

REYES: Running priest sidelined.

Popularly known as "the running priest," Fr. Reyes disappeared from the local scene nearly two months ago, quietly slipping out of sight just as the Philippines's political crisis was deepening.

There is talk that he is connected to a mission somewhere in Asia (not Southeast Asia), but people close to him did not want to confirm it. A priest from the Diocese of Cubao, where Reyes belongs, would only say that he is indeed "abroad" and that Bishop Honesto Ongtioco had announced so sometime in February.

Yet close friends and associates would not openly say where exactly he is and what takes up his time. The INQUIRER tried but failed to get official comment from the Diocese of Cubao regarding the status of Reyes.

Early this year, Reyes told the INQUIRER that he was "leaving." While he was his usual boisterous self that day, there was a tinge of sadness in his smile. He would not say where he was going and, more importantly, why.

His leave of absence at this time has raised more questions.

Did the nation's problems, the injustices he had fought against, finally wear him down? Or does he simply need to recharge his emotional and spiritual batteries?

That day, he took out a notebook containing messages from friends wishing him well. He also asked for this reporter's e-mail address, an indication that wherever he was heading, it was going to be far away.

His own decision

"I did not get any woman pregnant or embezzled any money or anything like that," he said with a chuckle. He did make clear one thing—it was his own decision to leave.

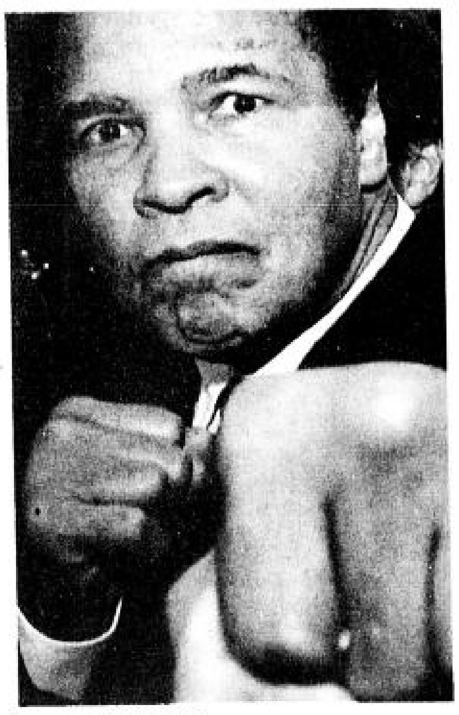
An official of his group, Gomburza, said the priest communicates with them via e-mail and text messaging. But besides saying he is "doing well and running again," the official refused to comment on his reasons for leaving.

"I miss him," said Racquel Naval, a longtime staff of Reyes. "I miss our advocacies, especially now ... You know, the only priest apart from Fr. (Raul) "Puti" Enriquez that holds Mass on the streets is him."

'Between me and God'

Citing Reyes's letter to the Gomburza e-group, Naval said it must be difficult for the priest to be out there where he is, watching

WHERE/ A13



MUHAMMAD ALI AP

Magic of Ali's name, image fetches $50M

THE MEDIA ENTREPRENEUR WHO CONTROLS the rights to Elvis Presley, "American Idol" and the soccer star David Beckham has added another star to his roster: Muhammad Ali.

Robert F.X. Sillerman, the chief executive of the entertainment company CKX, announced Tuesday that his company had paid $50 million for an 80-percent stake in Ali's name, image and likeness. The other 20 percent will be retained by Ali and his company, GOAT (short for the "greatest of all time").

Marketers said CKX could stand to reap a

MAGIC/ A13

Hundreds trek in the dark up to playground in the clouds

By Cecil Morella
Contributor

MT. PULOG—A LONG LINE OF tiny lights crawls up the summit of the Philippines' second highest mountain before dawn, like a giant, day-glo caterpillar inching up a stalk.

The sight of up to a hundred climbers with headlight torches ascending the bare, whale-shaped peak in the dark never ceases to amaze alpinist Ohmar Picache, who has conquered the summit himself more than 30 times.

Last year, the stocky 32-year-old outdoorsman who organizes sporting activities for corporate and other clients carried his seven month-old son to the top of the 9,610-foot mountain to introduce him to his playground among the clouds.

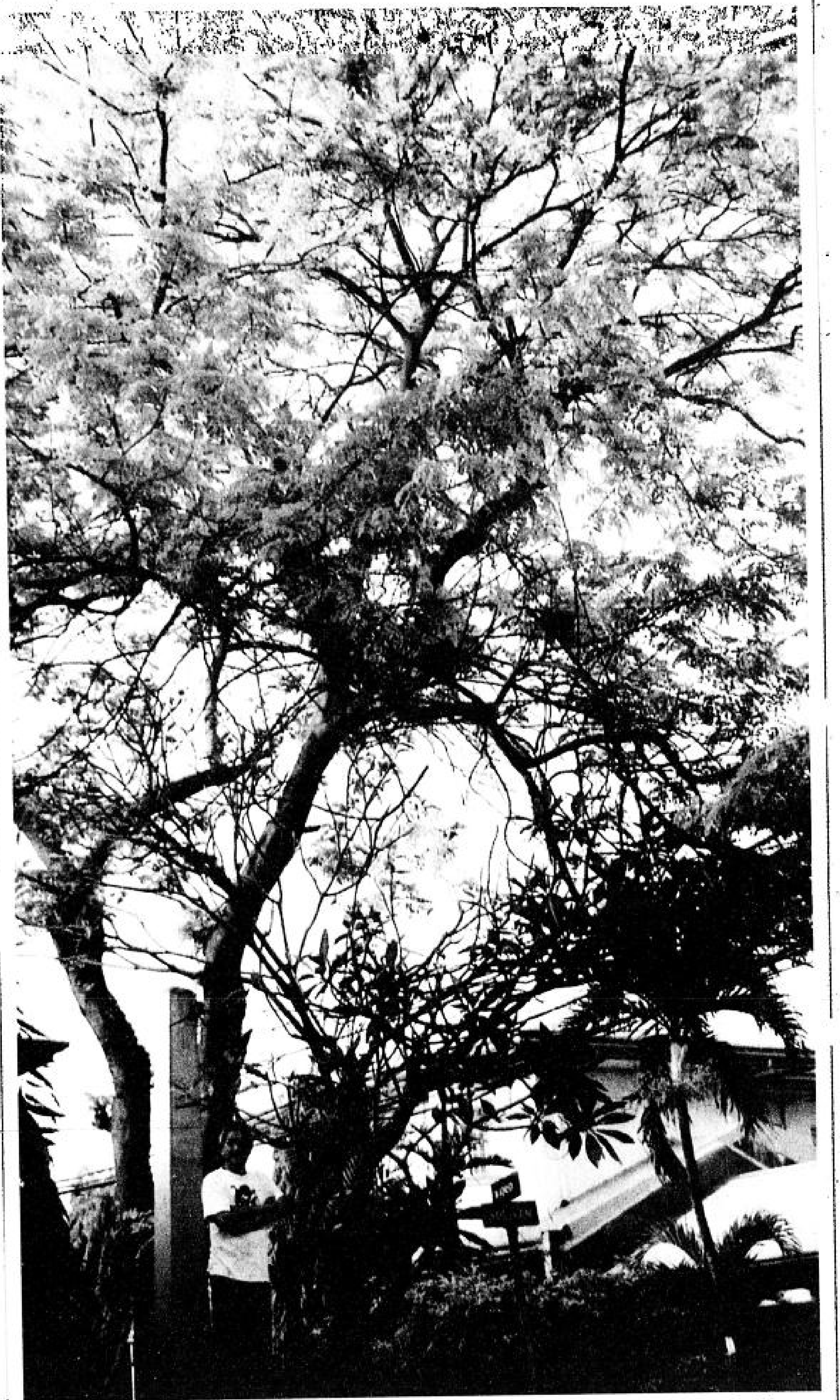
"On the move, he was asleep, mostly," Picache tells AFP. But the baby whimpered during rest stops, and dad had to nurse him with a milk bottle carried by his trailing nanny.

Drawn by the stunning panoramic views of the Cordillera range at the top, Pulog pulls several thousand climbers of all colors, shapes and ages every year, says Emerita Tamiray, superintendent of the 11,550-hectare nature reserve that includes Pulog and neighboring Tabayoc, the two highest mountains on Luzon island.

The sport is gaining more popularity in the Philippines with two teams deep in altitude training abroad in a race to become the first Filipinos to reach the top of Mount Everest, the world's tallest peak.

Here in the Cordilleras, park fees and payment for guides, porters and other services help make tourism a major economic backbone of the region, best known for its vegetables.

HUNDREDS/ A13



TREE-VIEWING. Painter-author Baldemor raves over his very own cherry tree now in full bloom, not in Tokyo or Washington D.C., but right outside his art studio in a Pasig subdivision. BALDEMOR

Cherry blossom tree blooms in artist's front yard

By Manuel D. Baldemor

(The author is among the Philippines' foremost painters.)

I AM SO FORTUNATE TO HAVE *sakura* or a cherry blossom tree now in full bloom beside my art studio in Pasig. The seedling that I planted was given to me by family friends 18 years ago and it took seven years of waiting and wishing for this tree to surprise me.

The Japanese highly regard sakura because it is one of the symbols of springtime—when Japanese children begin the new school year, when companies start the new business year, and networks begin the new program season. It signals the end of the old days and the beginning of the new, the coming of change and the perpetual stillness of Zen thought.

The family, who gave me the cherry blossom in a small pot, told me they had planted their own cherry tree seedlings in between the mahogany trees in their garden. But not one survived. The mahogany trees did not allow a full sun to nurture the cherry bushes. Also, where my friends live is known for its adobe terrain. Now, my friends visit "their" cherry blossom tree in my front yard.

My friends had gotten their

CHERRY/ A13

Davide: I would be honored to serve country in the UN

RETIRED SUPREME COURT Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. yesterday indicated he would be accepting President Macapagal-Arroyo's invitation for him to serve as the next Philippine ambassador to the United Nations.

"It's a rare opportunity to serve our country in the international scene and I don't think I have any reason to decline," Davide said in an interview in his native Cebu City yesterday.

Davide said that until late Tuesday he did not know that he had been chosen by the President to be the next envoy to the United Nations. He said Malacañang did not tell him of his appointment before making the announcement.

But he said he would be honored to represent the country in the UN in New York.

"It is going to be a challenging job," said Davide.

To replace Baja

In a March 24 letter to the congressional Commission on Appointments, Ms Arroyo informed Senate President Franklin Drilon, the CA chair, that she was nominating Davide as permanent representative to the UN to replace Lauro Baja Jr.

Only last week, Davide, who was the President's adviser on electoral reforms, submitted his proposals for the revamp of the Commission on Elections as part of a wider clean-up of the entire electoral system.

Yesterday in Baguio City, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Malacañang would have to submit anew its nomination of Davide when Congress resumes sessions after Easter.

He explained that this was because Davide was deemed bypassed as his nomination was made a few days before Congress took its Lenten break.

Ermita said the President chose Davide as Baja's replacement because he was "very competent and has both national and international stature".

He said Davide was also no longer senior presidential adviser on electoral reforms because that position was terminated when he submitted his recommendations on electoral reforms to Ms Arroyo last week.

Baja will stay on as Philippine ambassador to the UN until the CA confirms Davide's appointment.

'Juicy position'

Ermita hinted that Baja would be going on to a "juicy position" after his UN stint.

"There is always a place for those who are really good," Ermita said in Filipino.

He said it was certain that Baja's next appointment was being thought about and that Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo would be making the recommendation.

Ermita's statements somewhat bolstered speculations that Baja would replace Romulo, who is reportedly heading for Washington as the next Philippine ambassador there. *Jolene R. Bulambot, PDI Visayas Bureau, and Christine Avendaño*

Aplus METRO

Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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New rob charge filed vs 'Pajero lady'

Telltale list found in seized van suggests her operation is Metrowide

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES FOUND by police in a seized vehicle has strengthened suspicions that the notorious "Pajero Lady" operated in a wide area in Metro Manila.

Makati police chief Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio said yesterday a blue book containing the list was found inside the Toyota Innova of Lourdes de Guzman, who was convicted of theft and suspected of being behind several robberies.

She was recaptured early Tuesday morning after the owners of a house in plush Bel-Air Village in Makati City caught her in the act of rifling through their valuables.

Tagged "Pajero Lady" for using such a vehicle to enter posh villages where she would proceed to rob homes, De Guzman was caught in the house of businessman Jose Ching on Mars Street, Bel-Air Village in Makati City.

Blue book

Valerio said the blue book had a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers. "We believe these are her targets. We will call up the numbers to find out if they had been robbed," he said.

Police said her gray Toyota Innova (ZBK-938) was parked some 60 meters away from the Ching residence. Valerio said the ledger found in the Innova would be used as evidence.

"It shows she is not only operating in Makati, but around Metro Manila. We also found access stickers for entry to villages in Parañaque, Pasay and Quezon cities in the blue book," said the police chief.

Valerio could not say exactly how many addresses were on the list, estimating there were more than a hundred entries. "She must have found the names and addresses in the telephone directory," he said.

Valerio said part of her modus operandi could be to first call up the houses to check if anybody was home. If nobody would pick up, De Guzman would then proceed to rob the place.

Other cases

De Guzman, 52, escaped on June 13, 2005 from the Correctional Institute for Women in Mandaluyong City where she was serving her sentence of six to 20 years imprisonment. She is also facing several criminal cases, including a robbery case in Filinvest 2, Bagong Silang, in Quezon City last year, in various courts.

The Makati Police Station filed yesterday another robbery charge against De Guzman, who is also suspected of stealing jewelry from the Bel-Air house of businessman Bienvenido Banaag. Valerio said Banaag confirmed ownership of the jewelry found in De Guzman's possession after her arrest.

Police was also looking into De Guzman's possible involvement in another robbery case in the village.

Indonesian military attaché Gunadi Budi Prayitno, another Bel-Air Village resident, reportedly lost cash and jewelry over the weekend while he was out of the country.

Fire prevention never too late

By Margaux C. Ortiz

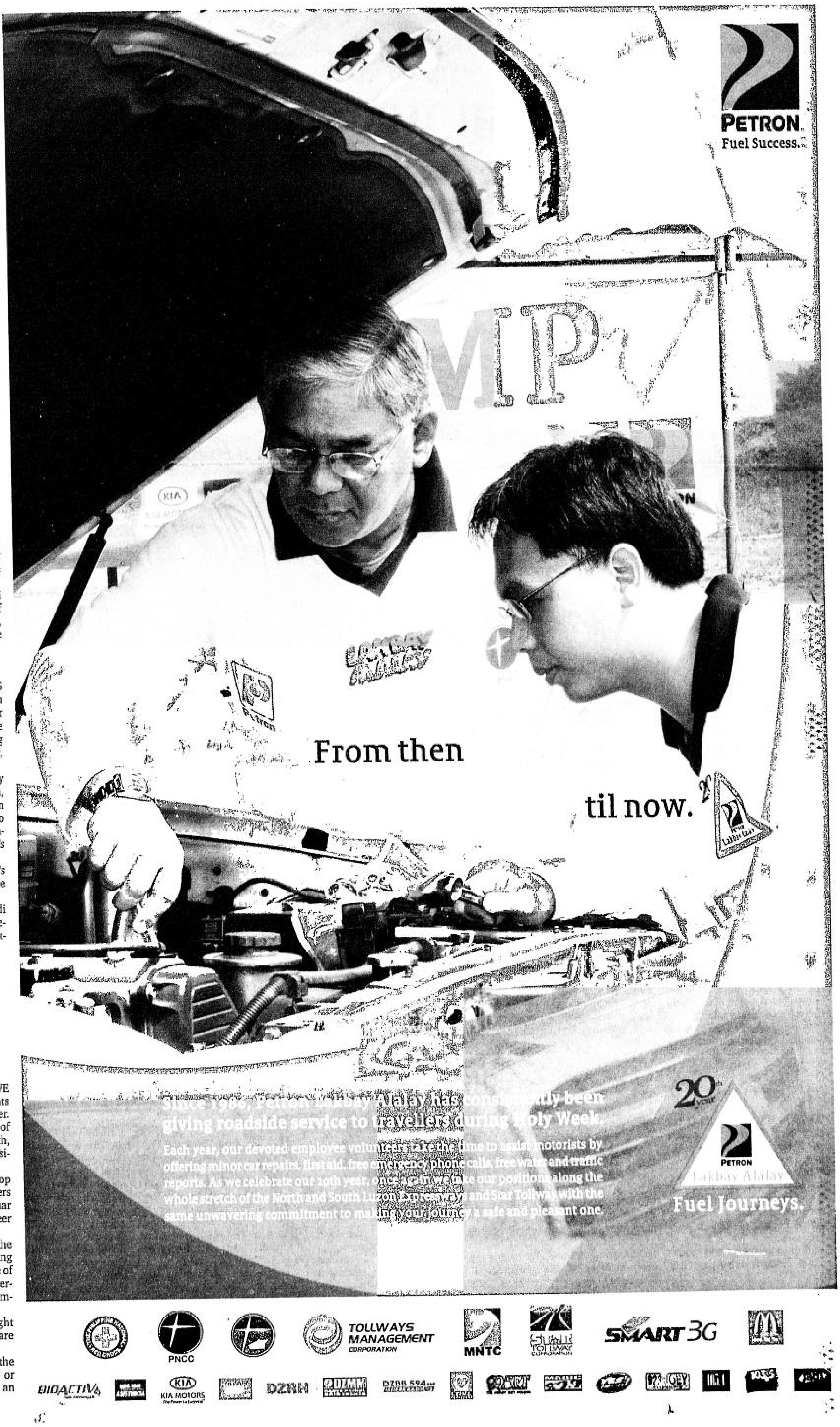
FIRE PREVENTION MONTH MAY HAVE come and gone, but firefighters say threats from fire-related cases are far from over. "Fires do not occur only during the month of March, which is also Fire Prevention Month, but all year round," said Meah See, Bahay Tsinoy vice president.

Bahay Tsinoy recently held a workshop aimed at teaching fire safety to homeowners and office employees. The fire safety seminar was conducted by Chinese-Filipino volunteer firefighters.

The Chinese-Filipino volunteers stressed the importance of establishing a common meeting place for all members of a household in case of a fire "The family should appoint only one person to go back to the house in case some members are still missing," See said.

"People should also make sure that light materials such as newspapers and clothes are not placed next to the stove," she added.

The volunteers also warned against the widespread use of "octopus connections" or several extension wires that could cause an electrical overload.



PETRON
Fuel Success.
From then
til now.

Since 1986, Petron Lakbay Alalay has consistently been giving roadside service to travellers during Holy Week.

Each year, our devoted employee volunteers take the time to assist motorists by offering minor car repairs, first aid, free emergency phone calls, free water and traffic reports. As we celebrate our 20th year, once again we take our positions along the whole stretch of the North and South Luzon Expressways and Star Tollway with the same unwavering commitment to making your journey a safe and pleasant one.

FULL-TIME volunteer Jo Decano (standing, third from left): No cushy jobs for her UGNAYAN NG PAHINUNGOD-MANILA, CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The joy of volunteer work

Two teachers find fulfillment in a no-frills life for a good cause

By Ditas Bermudez
Contributor

FOR MARIANITA SABADO, A teaching volunteer, the year she spent at the Victoria High School in Aglipay, Quirino Province, was a test of her will and skills.

To get to school, she had to walk for several kilometers on rough roads. Her classroom had galvanized iron sheets for walls and a clay floor which promptly dissolved into a muddy pool whenever it rained. Worse, she had to fight to get her students' attention whenever the roof started leaking.

Jo Decano, another GP volunteer, spent a year each in Bulacan and Sorsogon provinces teaching high school students. Her two-year teaching stint, she said, opened her to the realities of rural poverty.

"A student would be absent from school for a long time depending on the planting season. If you lose them within the first quarter, you lose them for the entire academic year," Decano said.

She recalled that at the Manuel F. Sia High School in Sorsogon, she started out with 40 students. By the end of the school year, the class had shrunk to 20 students.

Decano tried to talk the students into coming back, offering remedial classes so they could catch up on their studies. "But most of the time, the parents themselves dissuaded their children from setting foot in school again," she said.

Sabado and Decano are two of a handful of University of the Philippines graduates who took the proverbial "less-trodden path"—serving as volunteers of the Gurong Pahinungod (GP) program instead of opting for a corporate job with a fat paycheck.

Offering

Gurong Pahinungód (*pahinungód* is the closest word in the Cebuano dialect to "oblation" or the offering of oneself to a higher cause), is a program which echoes the "Doctors to the Barrios" project of then Health Secretary (and now senator) Juan Flavier. While Flavier's program assigns doctors to any of the 271 hard-to-reach municipalities in the country, GP sends teacher volunteers to public high schools in underserved areas.

Open to any alumni of the University of the Philippines, the program provides special training to volunteers who are not education majors, preparing them to teach Science, Mathematics, English and History. Schools in need of extra teachers, in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), are "matched" with volunteers who may have a special geographical or linguistic interest in a certain area.

Once deployed in a DepEd-recommended school, GP volunteers serve both as volunteer and regular teacher, closely working with a teacher-in-charge. They are also expected to render community service in the area during weekends or after school.

Sabado served for two years at the Victoria High School—in 2003 and 2005. Considering her experience in her first year at the school, her return puzzled the other volunteers. One of the students she painstakingly tried to give remedial classes to didn't make the grade.

Upon her return, she found out that the flunkie actually made it to the next level, his grade "pulled up" to a passing mark by other teachers "out of pity." The standard practice in the school, Sabado found out later, was to ask students "in danger" of flunking, to submit a "project"—which could be in the form of a monetary donation the school could use to buy books, repair desks, and other such "school improvements."

The young volunteer didn't expect to change the system overnight. "I joined the GP program out of a sense of gratitude because I was able to go to the UP. I saw in the GP a chance to be able to do something," she said.

Investment

Decano, a broadcasting major and a full-time volunteer, finds it hard to describe what she thought of the far-from-ideal circumstances GPs often find themselves in, living a no-frills life on a niggardly P4,000 monthly allowance.

Like Sabado, she consoles herself with the thought that the time they spent in little-known barangays is an investment they couldn't have made and an experience they would not acquired if they had chosen some cushy desk job in the city.

MARIANITA Sabado with students of Victoria High School: A chance to be able to do something for her countrymen. UGNAYAN NG PAHINUNGOD-MANILA, CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Reading program gets boost in Quezon City

By DJ Yap

AN HOUR OF READING A DAY can mean a lifetime of rich experiences.

That's what pupils from 18 public elementary schools in Quezon City will learn next school year, as they take part in the reading and literacy program of Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation.

Under the program, Grade IV pupils from selected schools shall be given at least one hour of reading time for 31 consecutive school days.

But the program will not stop when the month is over. Instead, it shall be continued in the succeeding school years, organizers said.

The idea, after all, is not just to make schoolchildren learn how to read, but also to learn to love reading, organizers said. Grade IV pupils were chosen because they are generally able to read already.

Sa Aklat Sisikat recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Quezon City school board seeking to promote the reading habit among elementary grade pupils and enhance their reading skills.

Reading carts with assorted children's books from the Asia Foundation, procured with the help of a corporate sponsor, HSBC, have been turned over to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr..

At the turnover ceremony at North Fairview Elementary School, Belmonte said the reading program was vital in improving the city's public education system, as well as developing a love for reading among schoolchildren.

Present during the affair were HSBC chief executive officer Warner Manning, Sa Aklat Sisikat president Margarita Delgado, reading program manager Bong Oris, Efren Balajadia, director of the Books for Asia program of the Asia Foundation, as well as local school board officials.

"Read today and lead tomorrow," Belmonte told pupils at the gathering.

MMDA sets up public service line for motorists

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FACED WITH AN EMERGENCY somewhere unfamiliar? Just dial 136.

Motorists going out of Metro Manila this Holy Week, who might find themselves in an emergency can call the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) hotline.

The agency has partnered with provincial road assistance authorities and organizations to provide public service during the Holy Week for motorists leaving the metropolis.

"Even if they are in Pampanga or Batangas, they can dial 136. We can inform local authorities that motorists need their assistance in a given location," said MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno.

Nacianceno said the agency thought of the quick-dial number to help Metro-based motorists going on a Holy Week break.

Upon receiving a call, 136 operators would call up local authorities and other volunteer emergency organizations in the provinces. The agency could relay emergency calls from as far north as Baguio City to as far south as Batangas.

METROBRIEFS

One and the same?

POLICE yesterday said they would look into the possibility that an alleged gunman earlier arrested for another assassination case could also be the one who shot dead former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot a year ago. Lanot's eldest son Ken had told Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino about a man who had approached the family two months after the murder. The man, who was out on parole from the New Bilibid Prisons, told the Lanots that someone had approached him days before the murder to offer him a job that would involve killing someone. The witness said he declined the job, but was shocked when he heard the following day that it was Lanot who was gunned down. "He told us he was bothered because my father had been good to him," Ken said, quoting the man. The man later identified a suspected gunman arrested for another assassination case as the one who had offered him the job after he recognized him in a television news report. Alejandrino said the information could be a breakthrough in solving the case. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Pabasa at city jail

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

AROUND 600 inmates of the Pasay City jail will hold a Pabasa, the ritual chanting of the passion of Christ begin with their Pabasa. A traditional Holy Week rite in the country, the Pabasa will be held from 9 a.m. today until 9 a.m. tomorrow, Good Friday, said Jail Officer 2 Adela Ricafort, rehabilitation division chief. Five inmates from the 14 detention cells will lead the reading every hour at the facility's chapel on the fourth floor. The Pabasa has been a decades-old tradition among the inmates according to Ricafort. Tomorrow, volunteers from the Sta. Clara Parish Church will come to the jail to participate in the reading of The Seven Last Words of Christ from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The city jail will also open its gates to visitors on Sunday so that the inmates could enjoy the day with their families, Ricafort added. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Holy Week on Hill

BUKAL ng Tipan offers a unique Holy Week Experience on the Hill. The program includes a Last Supper on the garden on Holy Thursday and discovering the "Peter" in us around a bonfire in the evening; carrying a cross to the top of the hill on Good Friday, just being a Simon or a Veronica to someone along the way, or identifying with the disappointments of the disciples of Emmaus on Saturday morning. The Bukal ng Tipan team, together with Fr. Mark Lesage, CICM and Mike Joseph, will lead the reflections and the liturgical celebrations. Come to the Hill on Holy Thursday (April 13) at 3 p.m. and leave on Saturday (April 15) at 2 p.m. filled with a longing for the power of the resurrection. For more information and reservations, call 6585064 or 0927-3091696 and look for Ria or Jojit.

Bank exec shoots himself inside QC office

By DJ Yap

A BANK EXECUTIVE SHOT AND killed himself yesterday inside a branch of the Bank of the Philippine Islands on Katipunan Avenue in Loyola Heights, Quezon City, according to police.

BPI Loyola-Katipunan assistant branch manager Ruben Cruz, 35, was found sprawled in a pool of his own blood inside a bank vault at past 7 a.m., police said.

He was rushed to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center but died at 10:15 a.m. while undergoing surgery, said SPO1 Robert Cajiles of the Quirino Police Station.

In a computer-printed suicide note, the victim, married and with a young daughter, said his good-byes to loved ones and mentioned personal relationship problems, Cajiles said.

Witnesses said Cruz, described by co-workers as a "workaholic," arrived at the bank at 6:25 a.m. with security guard Petronilo Falcon, who was stationed outside.

While on a routine inspection at the parking lot, Falcon heard two successive gunshots but was not alarmed as he was used to hearing such noise from a neighboring slum area, Cajiles said.

But when janitor Tristan Cuevas looked for Cruz, he could not find the bank executive, police said.

Falcon and Cuevas asked permission from branch manager Rowena Fuentes to open the records vault. They found Cruz with a wound in the head but still alive, police said.

A .38 caliber revolver, service firearm of the security guards, was found at the scene, Cajiles said.

A bullet was lodged in the door of vault that contained bank documents (cash was stored in another vault).

"He probably wanted to test the gun first before he shot himself," Cajiles said.

Though the case seemed to be a clear case of suicide, police said they would still look into other possible angles.

Pinoys don't pay their debts

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

FILIPINOS HAVE THE HABIT OF deliberately forgetting to pay their debts. It seems to be a national habit.

Example: President Marcos' Masagana 99 program aimed at making the country self sufficient in rice didn't get off the ground.

Why? Because the farmers who were given credit by the banks to buy farm implements and inputs such as fertilizer didn't pay their loans.

You know what the farmers did with the money? They bought non-essentials not connected with farming. They bought television sets, refrigerators and motorcycles. They gambled away the money.

You'll say that only poor Pinoys don't pay their loan obligation. Wrong.

Even in posh Ayala-Alabang Village, a resident owes his neighbors and fellow parishioners millions of pesos in debt. He was given the loans because of his standing in the community: lector at the village's St. James parish church; member of the Rotary Club of Manila, which has affluent members; member of the religious Knights of Malta.

A fellow villager and this guy went to the US together. This guy got first class accommodations, while the fellow villager, whom he owes millions of pesos, was at the economy class.

* * *

I HAVE with me a decision from the Malabon Regional Trial Court ordering Swift Tuna Corp., owned by the family of Jose Concepcion III, to pay Frabelle Fishing Corp. a debt of P7.2 million, with two percent interest every month from the time the debt was incurred, and P500,000 in attorney's fees.

And that's not the only debt incurred by the company owned by Concepcion who happens to be the presidential adviser on entrepreneurship.

A news item in this paper on Jan. 17, 2006 said that the Concepcion-owned Swift Foods Inc. was sued by San Miguel Corp. for its alleged refusal to pay the food and beverage conglomerate a total of P126 million in debts.

The amount represented assorted broiler feeds Swift acquired from SMC. The case is now in the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

The courts throughout the country are full of estafa cases as a result of people refusing to pay their debts.

* * *

MANY bus drivers have a criminal bent probably because that's what they've been told by the bus operators. Pity the pedestrian that they bump because these drivers will run him over twice or three times until the victim dies.

One such driver is Rollie de Leon of Santrans Bus Co. who allegedly ran over a father and his child whom he bumped over and over to make sure they were dead.

Larry Quimpo, 42, and his five-year-old daughter, Ronila were riding on a motorcycle in tandem when they were sideswiped by De Leon. Told by some passengers that he had sideswiped two pedestrians, the driver backed the bus and ran over the victims.

The elder Quimpo and the girl tried to stand up after they were bumped, but the bus rolled over them many times. De Leon escaped after the accident.

What made De Leon do that? He wanted to save his operator from paying hundreds of thousands in hospital bills and medicines for the father and child.

You see, one life costs only P50,000. Altogether, the Quimpos' lives totaled P100,000.

When my staff at "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" interviewed De Leon, he said it was an ordinary accident.

But there were witnesses. Two of them were children who said that the bus rolled over the victims several times. Children don't usually lie in a spontaneous interview.

What would you have felt if Larry Quimpo were your brother and Ronila your niece, given the statement of the witnesses?

You would have been tempted to take the law in your own hands.

Berlusconi refuses to concede

BERLUSCONI: Hangs tough because of slim poll margin. REUTERS

ROME—PRIME MINISTER SILVIO Berlusconi refused to surrender Italy's election Tuesday, alleging "irregularities" in a vote that gave a seat-of-the-pants victory to his rival Romano Prodi.

"We cannot recognize the outcome of a vote until there is a definitive clear judgement. Until that day, no one can say they have won," the flamboyant billionaire told a packed news conference in Rome.

Berlusconi raised the prospect of declaring invalid the pivotal votes for six seats chosen by Italians living abroad. That vote had swung the election to Prodi's center-left alliance, with four of the six seats going their way.

"On the foreign vote there were a great many irregularities," the premier said.

"It cannot be excluded that this vote can be declared invalid," said Berlusconi, who fought a vitriolic campaign to extend his five-year reign—the longest since World War II. .

He even offered the image of a German-style "grand coalition" in case a recount eventually ended with each side taking one house—a divided parliament.

"I think maybe we should follow the example of some other European countries, like Germany, to see if there is a case for joining forces and governing together," he said.

Each chamber in the Italian parliament has equal power, meaning both the lower house Chamber of Deputies and upper house Senate must be secured for a government to rule effectively.

But Prodi quashed the idea of setting up government with Berlusconi's camp.

"We came into this election with a set coalition, and the electoral law has alloted us a number of seats in the Chamber (of Deputies) and in the Senate which will allow us to govern," he told journalists outside his campaign headquarters in Rome.

Still, Berlusconi's declarations raised the spectre of a Florida-style recount debacle akin to the situation that brought his close ally US President George W. Bush to power in 2000.

Only minutes earlier, full results showed Prodi's Union alliance had snatched the elections from the conservative House of Freedoms coalition, after a campaign that had attacked the prime minister relentlessly over Italy's weak economy.

Prodi's center-left bloc took control of the Senate, which had been hanging in the balance, the interior ministry said. A full count had already shown him as the winner in the lower chamber.

"Whoever wins, wins, that's the beauty of democracy," the sober 66-year-old economist, nicknamed "Il Professore," said earlier in the day.

But Berlusconi's own Forza Italia party had said it would press for a recount given the wafer-thin margin—just 25,224 votes—which separated the two sides in the lower house. *AFP*

Iran announces major breakthrough in its disputed nuclear bid

IRAN'S Astan Qods Razavi museum chief shows a sample of enriched uranium. AFP

TEHRAN—IRAN ANNOUNCED TUESDAY it had successfully enriched uranium to make nuclear fuel, a major breakthrough in its disputed atomic drive that defies a UN Security Council demand for the work to stop.

The Islamic regime's hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also called for a no-holds-barred acceleration of enrichment work—a process that can be extended to make the fissile core of an atom bomb.

The United States immediately warned Iran was "moving in the wrong direction." Iran now runs the risk of UN sanctions when a Security Council deadline expires on April 28.

"Our people, with the help of God, have successfully mastered nuclear technology. Iran has joined the nuclear states," Ahmadinejad said in a speech to top military and political leaders in the northeastern holy city of Mashhad.

"Iran's nuclear program is purely peaceful," he added, calling on foreign governments to "recognize and respect Iran's rights."

He even called for "all nuclear officials to speed up their work so as to produce fuel for the country's (future) power stations."

The dramatic news was greeted by the audience with chants of "Allahu Akbar" ("God is Greatest").

Vice president and atomic energy chief Gholam Reza Aghazadeh said the milestone in Iran's programme was crossed on Monday—at a pilot centrifuge plant in Natanz—with the uranium enriched to 3.5 percent, or the purity required for civilian reactor fuel.

This, he asserted, "paves the way for enrichment on an industrial scale" using an enormous 110 tons of UF6 feedstock gas already produced.

He also said Iran was "determined" to complete work within three years on a heavy water reactor in Arak—which critics say which could also produce plutonium for a nuclear weapon. *AFP*

WorldBriefs

New telescope scans the sky for alien life

BOSTON—A Massachusetts observatory unveiled a powerful new telescope on Tuesday designed to capture possible light signals transmitted to Earth by extraterrestrials. The telescope is the first to be developed solely to search the skies for light pulses from aliens and will be able to cover 100,000 times the amount of sky covered by current equipment, its developers said. *Reuters*

Woman wins $27.5M from Southwest Airlines

EL PASO, Texas—A jury awarded $27.5 million in damages to a woman of Iranian descent who said she was racially profiled when Southwest Airlines Co. accused her of assaulting a flight attendant. Samantha Carrington of Santa Barbara, California, won her case Friday after suing the Dallas-based airline for false imprisonment and malicious prosecution. Federal authorities arrested her in 2003 after her Houston-to-Los Angeles flight made a scheduled stop in El Paso. She was never charged with a crime. According to court records, three flight attendants said Carrington, a naturalized citizen from Iran, became verbally abusive, grabbed a flight attendant's arm and threatened to go to the cockpit if the captain was not summoned. *AP*

High cholesterol linked to prostate cancer risk

LONDON—Men with high cholesterol levels, particularly if they were detected before the age of 50, may have an increased risk of developing prostate cancer, Italian scientists said on Wednesday. They discovered an association between prostate cancer and raised cholesterol in a study of more than 2,750 men, published online by the journal Annals of Oncology. *Reuters*

Everyone's fat but me, Americans say in poll

WASHINGTON—Ninety percent of Americans know that most of their compatriots are overweight, but just 40 percent believe themselves to be too fat, according to a study published on Tuesday. Government statistics show that more that 60 percent of the US population is overweight, and half is obese, meaning they are at serious risk of health effects from their weight. *Reuters*

US approves Eraxis for treating candidemia

NEW YORK—Pfizer Inc. has announced that Eraxis™ (anidulafungin) has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat candidemia, a potentially life-threatening bloodstream infection. Candidemia is the most deadly of the common hospital-acquired bloodstream infections, with a mortality rate of approximately 40 percent. In the United States, candidemia affects approximately one in 5,000 people, resulting in an estimated 60,000 cases each year. "Bloodstream infections such as candidemia can spread quickly and are very dangerous, especially for patients with weakened immune systems," said Dr. Joseph Feczko, Pfizer's chief medical officer. "Physicians treating these seriously ill patients now have an important new treatment in Eraxis."

Bird flu meet in HK

Hong Kong—Business leaders, government officials and health experts from around the region will meet in Hong Kong on May 3 to discuss continuity planning and crisis management for small and medium enterprises and large corporations in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. The "Business Continuity Planning and Disaster Preparedness for Avian Influenza" conference will be jointly organized by the Apec Business Advisory Council and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and is expected to draw around 500 participants representing several interests, including various businesses, SMEs, chambers of commerce and trade councils from the region.

YOUNG PENITENT
The hands of a mother adjusts the hood of a young penitent of "San Esteban" brotherhood before he participates in a Holy Week procession in Seville, Spain, April 11. Hundreds of processions take place throughout Spain during the Easter Holy Week. AP

Nepal police fire on protesters

KATHMANDU—NEPALI TROOPS OPENED FIRE on protesters on Tuesday, wounding many, after they burned tyres, chanted slogans and clashed with police in defiance of a curfew in the sixth day of mass protests against the king.

The violence came as international pressure increased on King Gyanendra to end his crackdown on the protests, in which three people have been killed and hundreds wounded.

The street campaign is the most intense since the 58-year-old monarch sacked the government and seized power 14 months ago.

Some analysts say it is only a matter of time before the king runs out of options. They say the protests and clashes, including in places where shoot-on-sight curfews were in force, showed more ordinary people were coming out openly against him.

But sources close to the palace said the king, whom some analysts describe as a stubborn ruler, was unlikely to relent.

Troops baton charged, tear gassed, fired rubber bullets and then live rounds to disperse more than 500 slogan-shouting demonstrators in the Kathmandu suburb of Gongabu, wounding about 100 protesters, a Reuters reporter at the scene said. *Reuters*

US shelved evidence contesting Iraq WMD

WASHINGTON—THE BUSH ADministration publicly asserted that two trailers captured by US troops in Iraq in May 2003 were mobile "biological laboratories" even after US intelligence officials had evidence that it was not true, The Washington Post reported on Wednesday.

On May 29, 2003, President George W. Bush hailed the capture of the trailers, declaring "We have found the weapons of mass destruction."

But a Pentagon-sponsored fact-finding mission had already concluded that the trailers had nothing to do with biological weapons, the Post reported, citing government officials and weapons experts who participated in the secret mission or had direct knowledge of it.

The Post said the group's unanimous findings had been sent to the Pentagon in a field report, two days before the president's statement.

Bush cited the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction as the prime justification for invading Iraq. No such weapons ever were found.

A US intelligence official, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity confirmed the existence of the field report but said it was a preliminary finding that had to be evaluated.

"You don't change a report that has been coordinated in the (intelligence) community based on a field report," the official said. "It's a preliminary report. No matter how strongly the individual may feel about the subject matter." *Reuters*

Israel gov't declares end to Sharon rule

SHARON, right, and Olmert in June 14, 2005 photo. AP

JERUSALEM—THE ISRAELI GOVernment signaled a formal end to the tumultuous five-year rule of Ariel Sharon on Tuesday, declaring the coma-stricken prime minister permanently incapacitated.

The announcement was made at a cabinet meeting which saw his deputy and recent election winner Ehud Olmert—handed the reins of power after Sharon's massive stroke on Jan. 4—confirmed in the post of acting prime minister.

Olmert is currently putting together a new coalition government which will be tasked with setting the final borders of the Jewish state by pulling tens of thousands of settlers out of the occupied West Bank in a follow-up to Sharon's decision to uproot Jews from the Gaza Strip last summer.

The change in status will only actually come into effect on April 14, at the end of a 100-day period laid down by law.

The government decision was moved forward due to the week-long Jewish Passover holiday which starts Wednesday.

After ministers unanimously approved the move, Olmert said he hoped that his own status as acting premier would not last long.

"We are busy forming the next government. I hope we will manage to finish the task quickly," he told his ministers.

Cabinet Secretary Israel Maimon told reporters that the terms of the basic law meant that "the government must appoint someone from the prime minister's faction as his replacement until the formation of a new government. *AFP*

NY cop's death linked to recovery work at 9/11 site

NEW YORK—THE DEATH OF A 34-YEAR-old police detective who developed respiratory disease after working at ground zero is "directly related" to Sept. 11, 2001, a New Jersey coroner said in the first known ruling positively linking a death to recovery work at the World Trade Center site.

James Zadroga's family and union released his autopsy results Tuesday, saying they were proof of the first death of a city police officer related to cleanup work at ground zero after the terrorist attacks.

"It is felt with a reasonable degree of medical certainty that the cause of death in this case was directly related to the 9/11 incident," wrote Gerard Breton, a pathologist at the Ocean County (New Jersey) medical examiner's office in the Feb. 28 autopsy.

A class action lawsuit and families of ground zero workers have alleged that more than two dozen deaths are related to exposure to trade center dust, which doctors believe contained a number of toxic chemicals including asbestos and more than 1 million tons of tower debris.

Zadroga, of Little Egg Harbor, N.J., died in January of respiratory failure and had inflammation in his lung tissue due to "a history of exposure to toxic fumes and dust," Breton wrote.

The detective spent 470 hours after the attacks sifting through the twin towers' smoldering ruins, wearing a paper mask for protection. His breathing became labored within weeks, he developed a cough and he had to use an oxygen tank to breathe. He retired on disability in November 2004.

The coroner found material "consistent with dust" in Zadroga's lungs and damage to his liver and said his heart and spleen were enlarged.

Zadroga's parents and 4-year-old daughter appeared at a news conference with half a dozen other detectives who said they have suffered from cancer, strokes, lung disease and other ailments because of post-Sept. 11 work at the trade center site. *AP*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Suicide bombers kill 57 in Karachi

MOURNERS pray during the funeral of three victims of the suicide attack, April 12, in Karachi, Pakistan. Officials closed schools in Karachi to prevent protests by students over the attack. AP

KARACHI—THE DEATH TOLL FROM A SUICIDE bomb attack on a Sunni Muslim prayer meeting rose on Wednesday to 57 in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi, where officials said they were on high alert for more violence.

Tuesday's strike by two suspected suicide bombers was the worst ever on Karachi, which has been plagued by sectarian violence and Islamist militant organizations angered by President Pervez Musharraf's support for the US-led war on terrorism.

"The death toll has now risen to 57, while there are also reports that some people are still missing," Salahuddin Haider, spokesperson of the provincial Sindh government, said.

"Our initial investigations suggest that there were at least two suicide bombers involved in the attack. We have found the body parts, including the heads, of the suspected attackers."

The attackers struck while some 15,000 worshippers from a Sunni Muslim organisation, Jamaat-e-Ahle Sunnat, had gathered for prayers in a city park at the end of a day that marked the anniversary of Prophet Muhammad's birth.

WOUNDED worshipper REUTERS

Among the dead were several locally well-known leaders of Jamaat-e-Ahle Sunnat, which has hundreds of thousands of followers among Pakistan's dominant Barelvi sect of Sunni Muslims, raising fears of a violent backlash.

The city was tense and deserted the morning after, with police and paramilitary troops patrolling roads shorn of public transport and almost all filling stations were closed, covered with thick clothes and barriers to avoid any attack.

Dozens of youths wandered around the bomb site, gaping at the badly damaged stage and the hundreds of shoes left behind by dead, wounded and panicked worshippers. There were two police vans parked at the scene. *Reuters*

Howard to face questioning over Iraq kickbacks

CANBERRA—AUSTRALIAN PRIME Minister John Howard will be questioned on Thursday at an official inquiry into alleged kickbacks by the country's monopoly wheat exporter to Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime.

Howard, who has submitted a written statement to the inquiry, said in a statement on Wednesday he had agreed to a request by the inquiry to appear. He will be the first prime minister to face an official inquiry since 1983.

The inquiry, headed by former Supreme Court Judge Terence Cole, has no political brief and can only recommend prosecution of the wheat exporter AWB Ltd. and other companies and associated individuals if Australian laws were broken.

A 2005 UN report alleged that the AWB was one of more than 2,000 firms that had paid kickbacks worth $1.8 billion to Saddam's government through the UN-managed "oil-for-food" account.

"The Cole Commission of Inquiry has requested that I appear at its hearings," Howard said. "The inquiry has indicated that it would suit its convenience for me to do that at 10 a.m. tomorrow."

AWB spokesperson Peter McBride said James Judd, the QC for the board of the wheat exporter, had no intention to cross-examine Howard on the witness stand.

But Howard will be cross-examined by lawyer Terry Forrest, who is acting separately for two AWB executives. *Reuters*

29 charged for Madrid train blasts

MADRID—A SPANISH JUDGE charged 29 people on Tuesday with murder or crimes related to the Madrid train bombings in a report which concluded that the Islamist group which planned the attack was inspired by al-Qaida.

Judge Juan del Olmo's report detailed evidence against the group ranging from its finances to telephone transcripts and also concluded that the bombers who killed 191 people and injured 2,000 others on packed commuter trains on March 11, 2004 were not directed by al-Qaida.

The report is the first official step in a process that will lead to one of Europe's biggest terrorism trials. The defendants are mostly Spanish or Moroccan.

The judge charged five people with 191 counts of terrorist killings and 1,755 attempted murders, while 23 others were charged with several forms of collaboration like falsification of documents and membership of a terrorist group.

Jose Emilio Suarez Trashorras, a former miner accused of providing the plastic explosives which ripped open train carriages and tore limbs off victims, was charged with 192 murders, including the death of a policeman killed during a raid on suspected bombers a few weeks after the attacks.

During the raid, seven top suspects blew themselves up in an apartment block. Another fled Spain, but died fighting in Iraq.

Because of the number of people involved, the March 11 case may not make it to court until early next year and will likely take another year to complete, judicial sources have said.

Del Olmo's report said the attacks were inspired by an Internet essay published by Global Islamic Media, which called for attacks on Spain before general elections in 2004 to try and force the country to pull out of the US-led war in Iraq.

"We do not believe the Spanish government will bear more than two or three attacks before popular pressure forces them to pull (their troops) out," a transcript of the essay said.

"We must make the most of the upcoming elections," it added.

The bombs exploded three days before a general election and the then-ruling conservatives, the Partido Popular (PP), quickly blamed the blasts on Basque separatist group ETA.

As evidence mounted linking the bombs to Islamists and the Iraq war, some turned against the PP and voted in the Socialists—who had promised to bring Spanish troops home.

Soon after taking power, they quickly fulfilled the pledge. *Reuters*

Mafia boss nabbed near Corleone

PALERMO, SICILY—BERNARDO Provenzano, the undisputed chief of the Sicilian Mafia who had been on the run for more than four decades, was arrested on Tuesday while hiding in a farmhouse near Corleone in Sicily.

"Thank God. The hunt is finally over," said Palermo police chief Giuseppe Caruso after agents seized Italy's most wanted man, scoring the state's biggest success against the Mafia in more than 13 years.

National anti-Mafia prosecutor Pietro Grasso accused businessmen, politicians and other professionals of shielding Provenzano for many years, but did not elaborate.

Provenzano, known as the "Phantom of Corleone" after his native hill town, made famous by the Godfather films, has been running the Mafia since former "boss of bosses" Toto Riina was arrested in 1993.

He was arrested when some 50 policemen swooped on a farmhouse in the countryside near Corleone. Police said their lucky break came when they tracked a package that had been sent to Provenzano by his wife, who lived in Corleone.

Provenzano, who put up no resistance and acknowledged his identity after first denying it, appeared surprised to be caught, police said. He was flown to Palermo and taken to the main police station there. Roads leading from the airport into town were closed to traffic.

An angry crowd shouted "Assassin" and "Bastard" at Provenzano as policemen wearing black balaclavas escorted him into the building. *Reuters*

BABY RACE

Year-old Reanna Bukta crawls with a litter of purebred Jack Russell terriers through the grass in Edmonton, Alberta, April 11. The puppies are owned by her neighbor, Ernie Newcombe, whose dog gave birth to the puppies five weeks ago. AP

Marchers slam St. Petersburg racist violence

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA—More than 2,000 people, including youth activists and African students, held a rally against neofascists Tuesday following the shooting death of a Senegalese student in a Russian city plagued by racist violence.

The demonstrators held banners, shouted antifascist slogans and marched in downtown St. Petersburg, where Lamzar Samba, 28, was fatally shot outside a nightclub Friday. It was the latest in a series of attacks on foreigners and immigrants in Russia.

The demonstration was organized by Nashi, a pro-Kremlin youth group, and some of its members wore black and white face paint to symbolize racial unity.

"I'm ashamed to live in the same city with people who attack and kill people with different skin or of different origin," said Yulia Kim, a Nashi member and St. Petersburg student.

A fight broke out between a group of Africans and two young men on a sidewalk who appeared to raise their arms in a Nazi salute, the Interfax news agency reported. It said police separated them and the two youths fled into a building. *AP*

Arnie seeks to combat warming

SAN FRANCISCO—GOV. ARNOLD Schwarzenegger called for a market-based approach to reducing industrial emissions of "greenhouse" gases, endorsing a plan to combat global warming that faces opposition from business and Republican leaders.

Speaking at a climate change summit Tuesday at San Francisco City Hall, Schwarzenegger said he supported creating financial incentives to curb the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and requiring companies to report their emissions.

"Let's work together to create the world's best market-based system to limit and slash emissions," Schwarzenegger said. "Everyone must do his or her part to pitch in and to make sacrifices, to give our environment the type of strong and committed protection that all Californians demand."

Schwarzenegger said he backed ideas in a report released last week by the administration's Climate Action Team, which listed ways to curb emissions from power plants, oil refineries and factories operating in California by 25 percent by 2020. *AP*

THE SAN Francisco Bay Area continues to get pounded with rain after its rainiest March on record. AFP

US Latinos flex political muscle, but can they deliver votes?

by Laura Bonilla

WASHINGTON—MASS PROTESTS demanding legalization of undocumented migrants has bolstered US Latinos, but it is too early to know if they can muster voters in upcoming elections.

The giant proimmigrant rallies across the United States have been led by members of the 40-million strong Hispanic community, the country's largest ethnic minority.

According to US census data, 60 percent of all US Hispanics were born in the United States, and the majority of the remaining 40 percent are legal immigrants. But the majority of the country's nearly 12 million undocumented migrants are of Hispanic origin.

For the first time in US history the Hispanic community joined nationwide to demand broad legalization of undocumented migrants and to protest legislation approved in the House of Representatives that would criminalize them.

"This is a historic moment that has the potential to change the political fabric of this country," said Erica Bernal, spokesperson for the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (Naleo) in Los Angeles.

"We like to think that the marches will continue in the next days and will culminate at the ballot box," she said.

"I have a message for all of the politicians in Congress and ... our president. Today we march, tomorrow we vote!" cried Jaime Contreras, president of the National Capital Immigrant Coalition, at the giant Monday protest in Washington.

Joshua Hoyt, who heads the Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights in the Midwestern state of Illinois, said in a phone interview that the marches have created "a national movement for justice for immigrants," which he described as "our generation's civil rights struggle."

US political parties "must understand that this is something that will not dissappear, it is becoming politicized and if there is no reform (that includes legalization) there will be political repercussions," he warned.

Those repercussions however are not likely to be felt in the November mid-term elections, but rather in the 2008 presidential elections and beyond, said Louis DeSipio, professor of Latino and Chicano studies at the University of California at Irvine. *AFP*

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FOUR DIGIT
4 7 7 7
(In exact order)

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MEGALOTTO 6/45
24 32 34 38 41 42
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Garduce set to fulfill nation's dream

FILIPINO HIGH ALTITUDE climber Romeo "Romi" Garduce has reached Everest's Base Camp last April 3—the first step in his goal to be the first Filipino to reach the summit of Mt. Everest.

Garduce's concentration is now focused on acclimatization.

The Bataan-born mountaineer is following the "Hillary Route" named after Edmund Hillary in his mission to plant the Philippine flag on the peak of the tallest mountain in the world.

At 29,035 feet, Mount Everest is revered by the Nepalese and call it "Sagarmatha," which means "goddess of the sky." It straddles the borders of Nepal and Tibet and sits on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau (Qing Zang Gaoyuan).

But the snow-capped majesty of the Everest hides dangers that have claimed the lives of many seasoned climbers and mountaineers.

Whiteouts—also known as blinding blizzards—avalanche and hypothermia are only some of the hazards that Everest climbers have faced since Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay of Nepal first climbed it in May 29, 1953.

A systems analyst for a multi-national company, who is also known in the international mountaineering community as "Garduch," the Filipino quietly left the country last March 4 to begin what is easily the climb of his life.

Garduch said his Everest climb is not for personal glory but to show that it is about time a Filipino joins other success stories in the historical annals of Everest.

The GMA Mount Everest Expedition is the fourth "Climb-for-A-Cause" that Garduch has undertaken.

The GMA Mt. Everest Expedition is co-presented by Northface and is supported by Caltex with Techron, My Marvel Taheebo and Revicon Max.

Set to benefit from Garduce's Everest climb is the GMA Kapuso Foundation, a non-profit organization of GMA Network, Inc.

Garduce has already scaled Mt. Cho Oyu in Tibet, Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina and Mt. Elbrus in Russia.

Mt. Cho Oyu, at 27,064 feet, is the sixth highest peak in the world and was scaled by Garduce last Sept. 26, 2005. It is the highest ever mountain climbed by a Filipino. Mt. Aconcagua is 22,975 feet and Mt. Elbrus 18,619.

Located at the borders of Nepal and Tibet, Mt. Cho Oyu—which means "The Turquoise Goddess"—is known as one of the deadliest mountains in the world due to the many climbers who have died trying to reach its summit.

Beneficiaries of these past climbs of Garduch were indigenous people (Cartwheel Foundation), underprivileged patients of the internal medicine ward of the Philippine General Hospital (Bukas Sarili Foundation) and the Bauan-Anilao Conservation project in Batangas.

GARDUCE: Ready for the formidable assault.

BI finally releases BAP's Lim

By Leila B. Salaverria

GRAHAM LIM, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE embattled Basketball Association of the Philippines, is now free to spend the rest of the Holy Week where he pleases.

The Bureau of Immigration yesterday ordered Lim's release from its custody in compliance with a Court of Appeals ruling promulgated last April 7. Associate Commissioner Arthel Caronongan said the order for Lim's release was signed earlier in the day.

"I know this is not yet the end of all my troubles, but I am very glad I got out of this nightmare," said Lim, who complained of sleepless nights and anxiety that aggravated his hypertension in his 19 days under BID custody.

The CA had earlier granted a temporary restraining order on Lim's deportation, which was the reason behind his arrest and detention by the immigration bureau last month.

"We have also ordered the recall of the guards assigned to watch him at the hospital because he's no longer under our custody. It would be up to his doctor whether he would be allowed to leave the hospital," Caronongan said in a phone interview.

Lim has been confined at the Metropolitan Hospital in Tondo, Manila, where he was taken due to high blood pressure and chest pains last week.

But Lim's heart physician Dr. James Cayetano advised him to stay for two more days at the hospital to ensure his heart condition and blood pressure are stable.

Caronongan said the release order was signed only yesterday because the Office of the Solicitor General, which the bureau consults regarding Lim's case, had asked for time to study the CA decision.

He added that Lim's lawyers were well aware that the OSG had asked for time because they had been communicating with the bureau since the latest CA decision came out.

The BI arrested Lim to carry out the order for his summary deportation after he was found to have misrepresented himself as a Filipino and violated immigration laws.

The bureau's Board of Commissioners earlier ruled that Lim is a citizen of the Republic of China. Among the evidence it took into account in issuing the decision were Lim's petitions for naturalization before a Manila Regional Trial Court and the Office of the Solicitor General.

Lim thanked BI Commissioner Alitio Fernandez Jr., who signed the release order, and Court of Appeals Justice Rodrigo Cosico and Associate Justices Rosalinda Asuncion-Vicente and Sesinado E. Villon.

Lim also thanked all BAP officials led by president and Joey Lina.

LIM

Barrera may come for Pacquiao-Larios

BARRERA

By Salven L. Lagumbay

WORLD BOXING COUNCIL AND International Boxing Federation super featherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera has confirmed earlier reports that he is planning to be at ringside when Filipino superstar Manny Pacquiao trades punches with Mexican warrior Oscar Larios on July 2.

In an interview with Boxingtalk's Brad Cooney, which was made available to Filipino fans through Pacquiao's de facto official website Manypacquiao.ph, Barrera acknowledged that indeed there's a plan to come to the Philippines and support Larios, whom he described as "a great friend."

Asked how Larios would fare against Pacquiao, Barrera said that everybody in their team has a lot of confidence in Larios, and that the Mexican "will do very well."

In the same interview, Barrera also confirmed an earlier INQUIRER story which quoted Oscar De la Hoya as saying that Barrera is ready to meet Pacquiao in November.

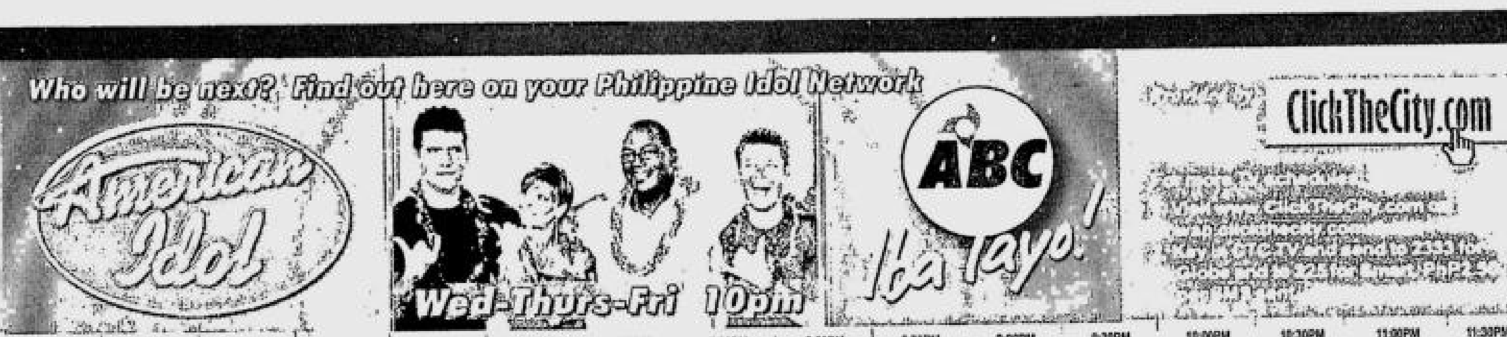
De la Hoya was interviewed at a teleconference with Cebu mediamen last month straight from his training camp in Puerto Rico, where he has been training for his May 6 battle with Nicaragua's Ricardo Mayorga.

Barrera said he is not looking past his May 20 assignment against Rocky Juarez at the Staples Center, and would be ready to discuss a fight with Pacquiao after that.

Pacquiao stopped Barrera in the 11th round of their featherweight bout in November 2003 in San Antonio, Texas.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Thursday, April 13, 2006


Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
Iba Tayo!
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)	National Geographic	Barclay's EPL		FA Cup		Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	S.O.S		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	All Results Show	Dokyu		Billboard On-Air
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Teens	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Princess Lulu		Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season 1)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Sakura Wars	Sakura Wars	PSI Factor (Season III)		Fear Factor (Season V)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Sports Disaster, Guinness World Records: 50 Years, 50 Records			
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Camp Lazlo	Coconut Fred's Fruit Salad Island	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		Powerpuff Girls		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One Cinemax		Parola Shadow Of Doubt (3:15 PM)				Noah's Ark Three Way (4:50 PM)		Beverly Hills Cop (6:15 PM)		Maging Akin Muli		Boa Vs Python		Eskapo	Bad Boys II			Himala	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Inside The Middle East	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Crossing Jordan		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	North Mission Road	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		What Should You Do?		The Closer		Prison Break	
Discovery Channel		Stormproof		The Greatest Ever		Animal Face-Off		Failure Analysis		Extreme Engineering		IBM Innovation Hour		Mythbusters		The Greatest Ever		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven/That's So Trendy Week	Wonderful World Of Disney			Tutenstein	Lizzie McGuire	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 Sports Billiards C'ships		Pool World Pool Masters 2001		Asian X Games Presented by Kia		In The Driver's Seat	Table Tennis '04 [illegible] C'ships	Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Finals		Pro Billiards '05 Women's Trick Shot Magic Billiards		Sportscenter Asia	2005 Kaohsiung World Pool Championship				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Veronica Mars 2		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Cascade Of Divine Mercy	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Sacraments Through The Ages	EWTN Presents		EWTN Live Episode With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9:15 PM)	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royal Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV		Strange Relations				Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law III		Missing II		Spooks 1		Thicker Than Water			Spooks I (11:45 PM)
HBO	Blue Blues (2:45 PM)				Don't Time On Planet Earth			Big Fish				Rome Ep 04: Stealing From Saturn		Rome Ep 05: The Ram Has Touched Wall		Rome Ep 06: Egeria (10:30 PM)	Real Women Have Curves (10:45 PM)		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Shadow OF The Elves	Mission Odyssey	Rune Soldier	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mermo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Mission Odyssey
IBC 13						This Is Your Day	Beloved: Voice Of His Victory	Ginoong Yaman Sa Ordinaryong Buhay	Muling Jose Maria Escriva	[illegible]		El Shaddai Holy Thursday							
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show With David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV			Everybody Hates Chris	The Late Show With David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fat	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	Sampson & Delilah						The Greatest Story Ever Told		
MTV Philippines		Punk'D		Sessions Sandwich	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Hits		Get Spotted	Rox in the City	Videography Bandit Boys	Handpicked: Sandwich	MTV Hits		Punk'D		Sessions: Sandwich	Rockola
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backstage	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Megastructures		Storm Stories		Frontiers of Construction		Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Terrorism Week		Megastructures: [illegible]		Storm Stories: [illegible]	
NBN		Teledyaryo Abs-Tina		Teledyaryo Sports Asap	Divas Ko, Mahal Ko Sa Sisi	Teledyaryo W/ [illegible] Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly OddParents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly OddParents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Yaka				Pusong Mamon: [illegible] Moms				Mumbaki				Ano Kaya Kung Sabi				Saw (Dubbed In Tagalog)
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zenki	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)				Love At Angeles [illegible]	Irene	Noel	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	O, Mare Ko		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9		Holy Week Special	Shalom Lenten Special									Spirit & Wisdom		Shaping Holy Week Special			This Is Your Day	Tinig Ng Pagbabago	Bread Of Life Healing Ministry
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports						NBA Action	NBA Game: Timberwolves @ Grizzlies			Gillette World Cup Preview 7		NBA Game: Nuggets @ Jazz					Sportsdesk	Asian Badminton Series	
Sports Plus	NBA Game: [illegible] @ San Antonio					World Poker Tour 2				Gillette World Cup Preview 7	Skydream	World's Greatest Auto Shows		World Game		Bravo Celebrity Poker Challenge			
Star Movies		The Predator (3:10 PM)				The Fan				Ordinary (8:50 PM)				If Only			Barbershop 2: Back In Business		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		American Idol	The Simple Life	The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	American Idol	The Simple Life	Scrubs	8 Simple Rules/Arrested Development	The Drew Carey Show	Less Than Perfect	Seinfeld	American Idol
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Spirits	TBA	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Video		Alias (9:20 PM)	Desperate Housewives (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Yeo stops alarming Harbour Centre slide in PBL

GAMES TUESDAY *(San Andres Gym)*
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Magnolia
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Montana

SLICK GUARD JOSEPH YEO TOOK the responsibility of bringing hope to his struggling squad.

With his team's confidence plummeting after four straight losses, Yeo displayed awesome form to lead Harbour Centre to two straight wins in the PBL Unity Cup.

And it seems the Portmasters' fortunes are bound to improve with Yeo averaging 22 points, six assists, 5.5 rebounds and two steals this week.

"I'm glad that everybody stepped up, especially Joseph, who is our key in our past two wins," said coach Jorge Gallent after the Portmasters recovered from their alarming 0-4 start.

Yeo unloaded a conference-high 27 points, including a clutch triple with 21.7 seconds left, to lift the Portmasters past the Granny Goose Tortillos, 84-81, in overtime last Sunday.

The former La Salle star also collected seven rebounds, six assists and three steals in an all-around effort.

Yeo remained hot two days later, scoring a team-high 17 points on top of six assists and four rebounds to pace the Portmasters to a 77-63 triumph over the TeleTech Titans.

"We need a go-to guy and he's trying his best, not only in offense, but in other facets of his game," said Gallent of the six-foot Yeo, cited as the Player of the Week by the PBL Press Corps.

The league takes a week-long break in observance of Holy Week.

Action resumes on Tuesday when the Montana Jewels and Toyota Otis Sparks try to keep their tie for the lead against separate opponents.

Toyota Otis will battle last conference's champion Magnolia at 2 p.m. while Montaña tangles with Hapee-PCU at 4 o'clock.

The Jewels and the Sparks are on top with 4-1 cards followed by Rain or Shine at 4-2. *Jasmine W. Payo*

GDAP holds show April 29 at Rockwell

THE GOLF DISTRIBUTORS ASSOciation of the Philippines is holding the 1st GDAP Summer Golf Show at The Rockwell Tent on April 29-30.

The summer bash is a compressed version of the 10-year-old Philippine International Golf Show usually held either late September or early October.

The summer show promises to showcase new releases from most of the participating companies especially since their mother firms usually come up with their launches in February.

"We intend to give our customers an early look at the products just released to the worldwide markets in the summer show," said GDAP president Lovell Gopez.

Gopez related that the idea of a summer version of the show popped up when members of the GDAP felt that they needed something to Top brands in golf will showcase the latest trends and models of golf products from equipment to apparel.

There will be various golf activities to be featured including a fashion show from the different apparel brands.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer and INQUIRER Golf are the official print partners of the GDAP Summer Golf Show.

Confirmed to participate are Acro Golf, Aetna Enterprise, Atendido Marketing, Besas's Shoes, Dunlop Slazenger , Electrobus Consolidated Inc., Gainers Marketing, Golf King, Golf Pro, Kart Plaza, Master Sports Corp. (Mizuno), Pacsports Phils. (Nike Golf), Pinnacle Distributors, Planet Sports Inc. (Callaway), Raymundo's Trophies and Sculptures and WS Sports Inc. (Wilson).

KARATE GRAND PRIX: The 2006 Karate Grand Prix presented by Fox Unlimited Promotions and Marketing Corp. will be held on April 15-16 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum. For inquiries, call Neil Generoso at 802-2031 and 0915-9430565.

Nepomuceno, Garbes top BMW Golf Cup Int'l meet

CLARK FIELD, PAMPANGA—FRANcis Nepomuceno shot a seven-over-par 79 equivalent to 37 Stableford points last week to rule the centerpiece men's class A event of the BMW Golf Cup International presented by Premier Cars at the Mimosa complex here.

Playing to a handicap of eight, Nepomuceno signed for a 40-39 card and nipped Felix Tienzo (85) by two to lead five others from this qualifying leg, including Tienzo, in the national grand finals in October.

Diomedes Garbes, a 22-handicapper, turned in a gross 90 for a net of 41 points to run away with the Class B plum. He will also see action in Eastridge together with second placer Rodolfo See (92) and Henry Uy (96).

Jimmy Bustamante booked the last national finals men's berth coming from this leg by finishing third in Class A after an 88 in the event supported by Corporate Guarantee and Insurance Co., Makati Shangri-La, Kerastase, Petron and Mizuno.

Annie Manipol submitted a gross 90 for a net 74 and won the ladies' plum. She, too, will play in Eastridge for a shot at the lone ladies berth to the world finals scheduled in Fancourt, South Africa, in December.

Organized by BMW Philippines and conducted by noted coach Jun Cedo, the third in this seven-leg series will tee off May 5 at posh Sta. Elena in Laguna.

The BMW Golf Cup International is one of the largest amateur golf tournaments in the world in terms of participation with over 150,000 players expected to sign up in qualifying legs all over the world.

Laylo wins; four others make team

NATIONAL MASTER DARWIN LAYLO WON HIS SECOND NATIONal crown and booked a seat in the Chess Olympiad after drawing with whiz kid Wesley So in the 13th round of the 2006 National Chess Open Championship last night at the Marketplace Shopping Mall in Mandaluyong City.

Laylo, who upended Grandmaster Buenaventura "Bong" Villamayor in a tense struggle of a Slav Defense in the 12th round, finished with 10.5 points to tow fellow qualifier Fide Master Oliver Dimakiling to the national team.

Dimakiling bested International Master Richard Bitoon to place second with 10 points and join Laylo and seeded GMs Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Joey Antonio in the biennial event set May 19-June 5 in Turin, Italy.

The 12-year-old So, a Fide Master, wound up tied with National Masters John Paul Gomez, Roderick Nava, Rolando Nolte, Mirabeau Maga and IM Petronio Roca with 9.5 points and will figure in a six-man playoff for the final Olympiad slot Monday in Tagaytay.

The playoffs, according to National Chess Federation of the Philippines secretary general and Tagaytay Mayor Bambol Tolentino will be a double-round affair so that the players can play with both the white and black pieces.

NCFP tournament director Willie Abalos said Mayor Tolentino will again host the event.

Woman International Master Sheerie Joy Lomibao topped the distaff side and also booked a slot in the Olympiad.

Lomibao edged Woman National Master Loreshyl Cuizon in 45 moves of a Caro-Cann to tally nine points in the 11-round affair with Catherine Pereña and Sherilyn Cua finishing with 8.5 and 8.0 points, respectively, for the next two slots.

Beverly Mendoza, Cuizon, WNM Shercilla Cua and 14-year-old Kimberly Jane Cunanan all wound up with 7.5 points and will figure in a similar playoff for the two remaining women's slots for the Olympiad.

Paragua, Torre and Antonio, the country's top three players, have been seeded into the national team by the NCFP headed by Surigao Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Alex will be missed; bon voyage Alex

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THEY BURIED THE REMAINS OF ALEX Montelibano in Bacolod on April 11, the day my eldest brother, Kuya Boy, was born 66 years ago. All of Bacolod, the City of Smiles, mourned the passing of one of its most admired sons.

From Bacolod the afternoon of the burial came a call from Luis "Golem" Silverio.

"Al, I'm still almost in tears up to now," Golem said. "This morning, we brought Alex to his final resting place. I will miss him."

Golem, the greatest Asian golfer who never turned pro, and Alex were teammates in the Philippine team that competed in the World Team Championship in Kawana, Japan, in 1962, and in Mexico City in 1966. Their tandem was a milestone as we have yet to see a pair of Bacolodnons represent the country in world golf team competitions, the Olympics of golf team play.

"He was such a good teammate, who played not for himself but for the country," said Golem of Alex. "He was from the vanishing breed of athletes who played as true patriots and never looked at the color of money when they played for their country."

Golem, now pushing 67, was twice invited to the US Masters, one of the four majors held in Augusta, Georgia, that was started in 1934 by Bobby Jones, the greatest golfer of all time who never turned pro. Jones, as told to me by Dr. Antonio Ma. G. Calanoc, was not only a legend of the game "but was also a lawyer and he earned a degree in literature with distinction, besides being an architect."

So fond was Jones, a stickler for amateurism, of Golem that he had Golem seated beside him in all official gatherings and functions during the two times that Golem was at the Masters.

Also sending text messages to inform me of Alex's death were Alex Sison, Alex Montelibano's teammate at Luisita for many years, and Jake P. Ayson, the NGAP executive director. As you know, the departed Alex was a many-time director of the NGAP for the Visayas.

Alex will be missed.

* * *

Remember Alex Marcial, who at 18 became the country's youngest Davis Cup player in 1968 in Tokyo?

Now pushing 57, Alex, who also played in the Davis Cup in 1969, 1970, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1980 and 1981, is in town after staying in the US for 23 years. This top-spinning player, who introduced power tennis in the country, has two sons, Alex Jr. and Albert Brian, by wife Teresita Acevedo of Roxas City. They reside in West Covina, California.

"I am now a grandfather, but I still play tennis and teach the game that has given me success all these years," said Alex, whom I had the precious chance to share a bottle of wine with at Rockwell's Titania last week with Angel Doble, the PNB man from Iloilo whom I haven't seen for nearly 30 years since our CEGP days. I had written a magazine piece about Alex when I was still with Panorama, the Bulletin magazine, in 1978.

Wow, how time flies!

Except for a little paunch, Alex, who won two gold medals in the 1981 SEA Games in Manila to earn the PSA's Tennis Player of the Year award that year, has retained his muscular physique.

"My two sons played tennis, too, and they earned college degrees as tennis scholars," said Alex, a poor "fisherboy" who picked up the game at age 10 in his native Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite, through the prodding of Florentino Bautista Jr., the former basketball Olympian. Five years later, he'd become a tennis scholar at Mapua, Adamson and PSBA, where he earned a business administration degree.

Besides tennis, Alex also does ballroom dancing now.

"Mostly on weekends, my wife and I join Filipino parties in West Covina where we can do ballroom dancing," said Alex. "Besides being also a good exercise, ballroom dancing, like tennis, is good therapy for the frayed nerves and tired soul."

Alex and I had planned on a ballroom dancing stint at Savannah along Libis but, unfortunately, we ran out of time. Alex and his wife, Tess, are flying back to America today after a fleeting two-week vacation.

Bon voyage, my friend.

* * *

FASTBREAK. The 3rd Rey Berroya Cup, the nation's most prestigious invitational shooting event, fires off April 22-23 at the Quezon City Police firing range, Camp Karingal, Q.C. The PPSA-sanctioned Level 1 match features 5 action-packed pistol and 3 shotgun stages. Proceeds of the shoot will go to the burned and crippled children under the care of Maharlika Shrine Oasis and The Green Initiatives Inc.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

SPORTSWATCH

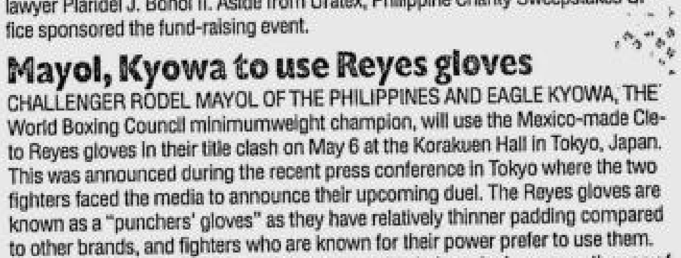
FORMER Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit (left) gets the Association of National Olympic Committee medal of merit award from IOC head Freddie Rogge.

Garcia rules Swing For A Cause

LAWYER ED GARCIA SHOT AN EAGLE AIDED 85 AND NETTED A SCORE OF 68 to gain overall championship in the third 76RS "Swing For A Cause" golf tournament at Valley last April 7. The Class "A" title went to Ed Manzanares at the expense of Gary de Guzman (1st runner-up) and Noel Flores (2nd runner-up). Class B champion was Alison Vega, who bested Manny Magnaye (1st runner-up) and Ernesto Bautista Flores (2nd runner-up). The Class C champion was Mike de la Gracia, who beat Rolando Milan (1st runner-up) and Ben Malcontento Flores (2nd runner-up). The longest drive was awarded to Gard de Guzman; the most accurate drive to Alison Vega; and nearest the pin to Frederick Parayno. Fellowship and awarding was emceed by Greg Pacifico and Vlady Ponce de Leon. The Samar National School Class '76 Foundation is going to send at least 100 Uratex armchairs to Samar National School in Catbalogan, Samar, in time for its grand alumni homecoming from April 27 to April 30 , according to Foundation's president lawyer Plaridel J. Bohol II. Aside from Uratex, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office sponsored the fund-raising event.

Mayol, Kyowa to use Reyes gloves

CHALLENGER RODEL MAYOL OF THE PHILIPPINES AND EAGLE KYOWA, THE World Boxing Council minimumweight champion, will use the Mexico-made Cleto Reyes gloves in their title clash on May 6 at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo, Japan. This was announced during the recent press conference in Tokyo where the two fighters faced the media to announce their upcoming duel. The Reyes gloves are known as a "punchers' gloves" as they have relatively thinner padding compared to other brands, and fighters who are known for their power prefer to use them. Since both Kyowa and Mayol are both known for their explosive power, the use of the Reyes gloves is expected to result in an abbreviated fight. *Salven Lagumbay*



TRIAD INDUCTION: Triathlon Association of the Philippines president Tom Carrasco Jr. inducted recently the officers of the Triathlon Association of Davao. Elected were Alexander Sam, president; Bong Rivera, VP; Boy Romero, Eric John Luna and Obet Quirequire, Asst. VPs; Laynare Macarayo, secretary and Flores Mae Flores, treasurer.

1st Open invitational cagefest

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES REGION IV WILL launch the 1st Open Invitational Basketball Tournament, also known as the Commissioner's Cup on April 30 at the Pavilion Mall, Binan, Laguna. A total of 10 teams are participating in the tournament sanctioned by the BAP and supervised by BAP Region IV led by Regional Commissioner, Chief Operating Officer and Tournament Director Leonardo "Ding" Andres Sr., treasurer and Tournament Commissioner Andrew Ayson and sponsors Pavilion Mall, Target Mall and Sports House.

DON TUASON CUP: The Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo is staging the Don Celson Tuason Centennial Cup member-guest tournament on April 20-23 at the south and executives courses. Heading the preparations are (from left) Mar Platon, Teboy Javier (director of golf), Bong Olizon (general manager), Meckoy Quiogue, Mar Marron, Joey Salindong (chair of the organizing committee) director Bobon Topacio, Pete Maniego, Dina Flancia, Arch. Gene Flancia, Bobby Roxas and Popoy del Rosario.

Suico OPBF bout moved to May 27

WORLD BOXING COUNCIL NO. 10 lightweight Randy Suico will now shoot for the Oriental Pacific Boxing Federation lightweight title against Thailand's Pongpetch Chuwatana on May 27 in Cebu.

Suico's manager Joe Koizumi of Japan said Suico and the Thai will collide for the OPBF lightweight belt relinquished by Japan's Chikashi Inada.

The Japanese will also vie for the interim WBC title against Sirimongkol Singmanassak in Los Angeles on May 20 underneath the Marco Antonio Barrera-Rocky Juarez showdown.

Suico himself had relinquished his old OPBF super featherweight belt due to difficulties in making the 130-lb limit.

"If victorious in the OPBF elimination bout, Suico would participate in a semifinal beneath the Manny Pacquiao-Oscar Larios confrontation in Manila on July 2 with only a 35-day interval. *SalvenLagumbay*

Yao slated to undergo foot surgery

HOUSTON—HOUSTON ROCKETS CENTER Yao Ming will have surgery this weekend on his broken left foot and the injury could take four to six months to heal, general manager Carroll Dawson said Tuesday.

The 2.29-meter (7-foot-6) Yao was hurt in the first quarter of an 85-83 loss to Utah on Monday.

An MRI performed in Houston on Tuesday showed a crack in the fifth metatarsal bone of the foot, Dawson said.

"It can be fixed two ways," Dawson said. "You could just put a cast on it, but it takes forever. The thing most people do is have the surgery."

It is not known if the surgery will prevent Yao from playing in the Fiba World Championship in Japan, which begins Aug. 19.

Earlier this season, Yao missed 21 games following surgery to remove an infection from his left big toe. Since the NBA All-Star Game, Yao has been one of the league's top performers, averaging 26.6 points and 12 rebounds.

Eliminated from playoff contention, the Rockets have four games left in their injury-wracked season, starting Wednesday game against Minnesota.

Leading scorer Tracy McGrady has missed 30 games with recurring back problems. As a whole, Rockets players have missed 258 games to injuries. *AP*

NBA expands to 13 players

NEW YORK—NBA POSTSEASON ROSTERS will expand to 13 this season, with teams deactivating one player before each game.

This will be the first time teams will be allowed to make changes during the playoffs. In the past, they had to stick with the same 12-man roster throughout the postseason.

The new rule was approved by the board of governors and announced on Tuesday.

NBA spokesperson Tim Frank said the change was made to give teams the same kind of roster room they had during the regular season. Under the new collective bargaining agreement, rosters were expanded to 15, with teams placing 12 players on the active list before each game.

The regular season ends on April 19, and the playoffs begin three days later. *AP*

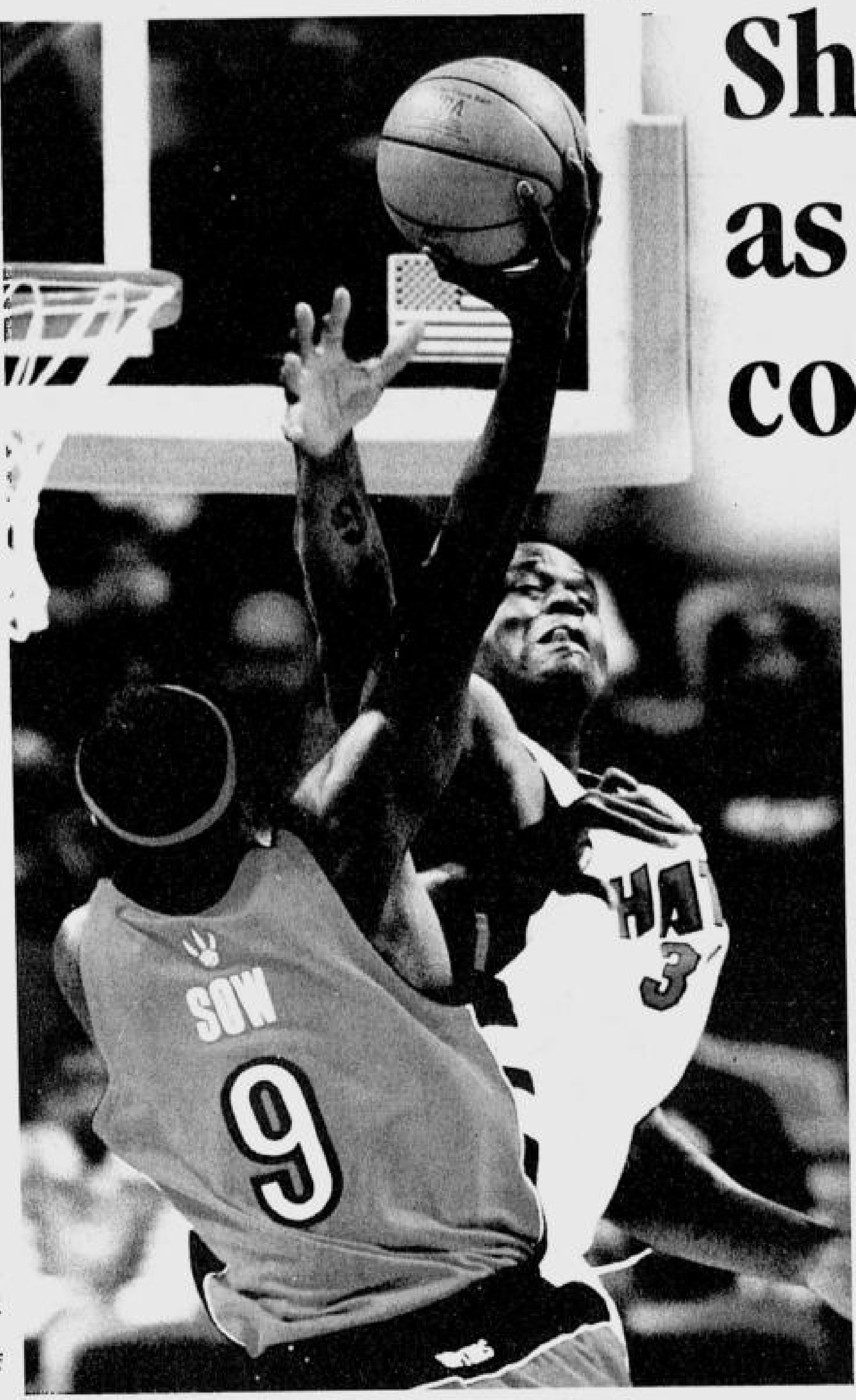
Stars involved in global camps

NEW YORK—STEVE NASH WILL RETURN TO his birthplace at this year's Basketball without Borders camp in South Africa.

The basketball instructional camp, in its sixth year, also teaches about such social issues as HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. More than 120 players, coaches and team personnel have taken part.

The camp also will go to Lithuania and Puerto Rico for the first time. It also will return to China, with the announcement set for Wednesday. Yao Ming will lead the group that goes to his hometown of Shanghai. Last year's camp was in Beijing.

NBA commissioner David Stern said the program "transcends all boundaries."



MIAMI Heat's Shaquille O'Neal (right) fouls Toronto Raptors' Pape Sow. AP

Shaq attacks as Heat melt cold Raptors

NEW YORK—SHAQUILLE O'NEAL registered a second career triple-double and Antoine Walker scored a season-high 32 points to lead the Miami Heat to a 106-97 victory over the fading Toronto Raptors in Florida on Tuesday.

Miami's leading scorer Dwyane Wade was absent with the flu, leaving O'Neal to take charge with 15 points, 11 rebounds and a career-high 10 assists.

O'Neal's only other triple-double came in Nov. 20, 1993 for the Orlando Magic against the New Jersey Nets.

Derek Anderson contributed 17 points for Miami while Gary Payton and Udonis Haslem each added 15 as the Heat moved closer to clinching the Eastern Conference second seed, lowering their magic number to two with New Jersey's loss to the Chicago Bulls.

Mike James paced Toronto with 32 points, becoming the first Raptor to score 30 or more points in four consecutive games.

Morris Peterson had 23 points and Darrick Martin added 13 in a losing cause.

With Wade out of the line-up, the Raptors concentrated their efforts on slowing down O'Neal, double-teaming the Heat's gigantic center.

O'Neal ran into early foul trouble but inflicted enough damage in 28 minutes of work to send the slumping Raptors to their ninth straight defeat.

"I knew they (Raptors) were going to double me so I just trying to keep my guys involved," O'Neal told reporters.

"They kept doubling me and I just kept passing and my team mates were making me look good.

"I just always try to have a positive impact on the game." The Heat took command right from the tip off, leading 31-21 after the first quarter and 61-51 at the halftime intermission.

In Chicago, Ben Gordon bagged 36 points, including 21 in the final quarter, as the Bulls downed the New Jersey Nets 104-101 to move into a tie with the Philadelphia 76ers for the Eastern Conference's eighth and final playoff spot.

Kirk Hinrich chipped in with 22 points and dished out nine assists and Andres Nocioni had 20 points and added a career-high 17 boards as the Bulls continued their stretch drive for a post-season berth recording their fifth win in six games.

Vince Carter led New Jersey with a game-high 43 points but it was not enough to bail out the Nets.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant nailed 31 points and Lamar Odom had a triple double as the Lakers eased to a 111-100 win over the slumping Golden State Warriors. *Reuters*

Solar Sports will air the Denver-Utah tussle at 9 a.m. today.

Noah treads own path to fame

WASHINGTON—SLOWLY SHAKING his head and squinting his eyes, Joakim Noah painfully recalls life in Paris when his father first took him to a tennis court.

While most people would be thrilled to get a private lesson from a former French Open champion, the experience was agonizing for a 5-year-old.

Spectators gawked at his immature strokes and the comparisons began.

"When I was young, people would want to watch," Noah said.

"And when you're a little kid, you don't want that. You don't want people watching you and comparing you to your father.

"You just want people to leave you alone. You just want to enjoy it." Joakim Noah is now the center of attention in his own right, not because he is the son of 1983 French Open champion Yannick Noah but because of his ability on the basketball court.

The University of Florida rode the enormous talent of its 6-foot-11, 225-pound forward to claim its first national championship last week in Indianapolis, a 73-57 whipping of tradition-rich UCLA.

Noah ran the floor like a thoroughbred, scoring 16 points, grabbing nine rebounds and collecting a championship-game record six blocks while leading the Gators to the title.

The elder Noah watched the game from the stands in Indianapolis, cheering his son's every basket and grimacing when UCLA would make a run.

Yannick Noah, the last Frenchman to win the coveted Roland Garros title, is now a reggae star in Europe and rarely gets to watch his son play basketball.

Joakim moved to New York in 1998 with his mother, Swedish beauty queen Cecilia Rodhe, who divorced Yannick when their son was four. He honed his basketball skills in "the projects," he said, while his family went on "nice vacations."

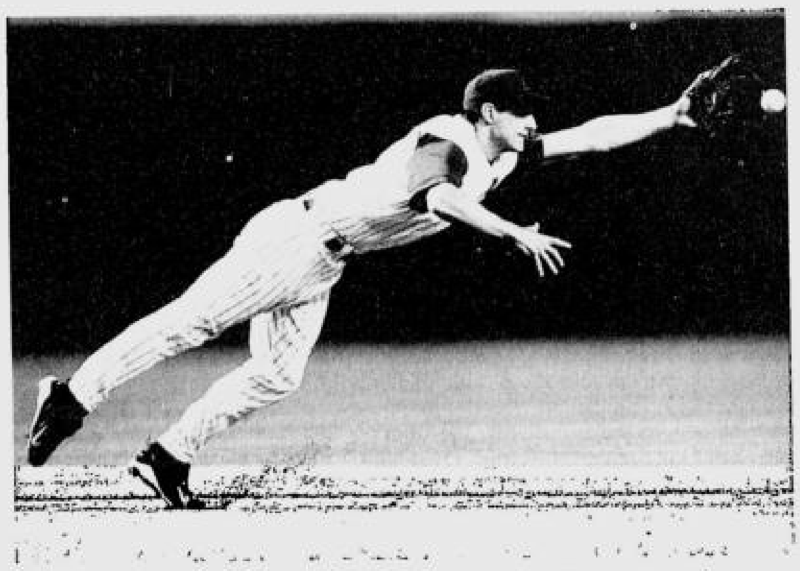
"I knew if I wanted to play at this level that I couldn't go on vacation with my family," he said. "I lived with my mother and my sister but when they went back to France I stayed in the projects in New York to play basketball." Noah played sparingly as a freshman at Florida last year so he went back to New York over the summer and played in the gritty Rucker Park league. He enjoyed it, in part, because opponents did not know his athletic pedigree.

The 21-year-old Noah emerged as a star this season, averaging more than 14 points and seven rebounds a game. His 29 blocks was an NCAA Tournament record.

He bullied UCLA with his scoring, shot-blocking and perhaps, above all, his enthusiasm.

"He's a guy that plays to complete exhaustion," said Florida coach Billy Donovan. He has a great threshold to continually run through fatigue. *Reuters*

JOAKIM Noah shows off the Florida Gators championship trophy. AP



CRAIG Counsell of the Arizona Diamondbacks dives for the ball but comes up short on a single by Garrett Atkins of the Colorado Rockies in the seventh inning during the April 11 game at Chase Field in Phoenix, Arizona. AFP

BASEBALL-MLB-RESULTS (UPDATE 1) April 12 (Infostrada Sports)—Results from the MLB games on Tuesday (home team in CAPS) NY Yankees 9, Kansas City 7; NY Mets 7, Washington 1; Boston 5, Toronto 3 ; Cincinnati 9, Chicago Cubs 2; San Diego 9, Florida 3; Cleveland 9, Seattle 5; Pittsburgh 7, LA Dodgers 6; Baltimore 8, Tampa Bay 4; Minnesota 7, Oakland 6; Colorado 6, Arizona 5; LA Angels 5, Texas 4.

Jeter's 3-run homer lifts Yankees in home opener

NEW YORK—DEREK JETER'S THREE-run homer capped a five-run rally in the eighth inning and the New York Yankees beat the Kansas City Royals 9-7 Tuesday to win their club-record ninth straight home opener.

New York wasted a 4-1 lead and trailed 7-4 in the eighth when it loaded the bases against Andrew Sisco (0-1). Robinson Cano hit an RBI groundout and Bernie Williams punched a run-scoring single to left.

That brought up Johnny Damon, playing his first game in pinstripes. Ambiorix Burgos relieved and struck him out, but Jeter sent the next pitch soaring into the left-field seats.

Scott Proctor (1-1) pitched one inning for the win, and Mariano Rivera finished for his first save.

Kansas City lost its 12th straight at Yankee Stadium dating to August 2002. Reggie Sanders and Shane Costa homered for the Royals, who couldn't overcome nine walks.

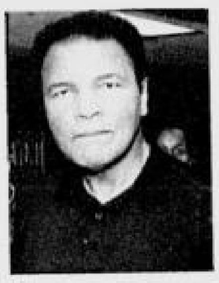
Jason Giambi hit a three-run homer in the first inning off struggling Joe Mays, and Damon jump-started New York's early offense with a double and a walk in his first two plate appearances.

Bob Sheppard's distinctive voice was missing from the home opener for the first time since 1950. The public-address announcer, who started with the Yankees in 1951, threw out his left hip Monday night at his Long Island home. He will miss the three-game series against the Royals and hopes to be back April 21.

At Boston, Josh Beckett held Toronto to three hits in seven innings, Mike Lowell went 4-for-4 with three doubles and Boston beat Toronto, 5-3, in its home opener for its fifth consecutive win.

A year after an epic ceremony to celebrate their first World Series title in 86 years, the Red Sox held a more downscale event. In addition to the usual fighter jet fly-over and ceremonial first pitch, the team asked for a moment of silence in memory of longtime broadcaster Curt Gowdy. *AP*

Firm buys Ali name for $50M



ALI

NEW YORK—MUHAMMad Ali, one of the world's most recognized people, has sold 80 percent of the marketing rights to his name and likeness to a firm for $50 million (euro41.3 million).

The 64-year-old former heavyweight champion, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, will retain a 20 percent interest in the business. The new venture will be operated by a company called G.O.A.T. LLC, an acronym for "The Greatest of All Time."

Ali and wife Lonnie are expected to work with CKX, Inc. to market his interests around the world. The deal includes trademarks owned by the boxing great.

"This relationship with CKX will help guarantee that, for generations to come, people of all nations will understand my beliefs and my purpose," Ali said in a statement issued on Tuesday by the company. "I am honored to be able to partner with CKX as they continue to grow."

CKX has concentrated primarily on entertainment and holds the rights to the IDOLS television brand, which includes the show "American Idol." It also holds the rights to Elvis Presley's marketing, and has an interest in the operations of Graceland, Presley's Memphis, Tennessee, home. *AP*

Corrales, Castillo to fight June 3 in Las Vegas

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORnia—Diego Corrales and Jose Luis Castillo will fight for the WBC lightweight title June 3 in Las Vegas.

The fighters have split two previous meetings. The third bout was announced Tuesday.

Corrales is 40-3 with 33 knockouts. Castillo, a former two-time WBC lightweight champion, is 54-7 with one draw and 47 knockouts.

Corrales won their first bout on a 10th-round TKO that gave him the WBC title in May 2005 in Las Vegas.

Castillo won the rematch five months later with a fourth-round knockout. But Corrales earned the WBC title when Castillo failed to make the 61-kilo (135-pound) limit and one of his camp members was caught trying to tamper with the scale at the weigh-in.

"It will not be easy, but I will definitely make the weight this time," Castillo said.

The 12-round bout will be held at the Thomas & Mack Center. *AP*

WBC LIGHTWEIGHT boxing champion Diego "Chico" Corrales (left) poses with challenger Jose Luis Castillo of Mexico. A 12-round world title bout, scheduled for June 3 at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas, will be the third between the two boxers. AP

SPORTS

US CLAY COURT TILT

Roddick notches easy win

ANDY Roddick hits a return. AP

NEW YORK—DEFENDING CHAMPION and top seed Andy Roddick eased into the second round of the US Clay Court Championships in Houston on Tuesday, with a straightforward 6-3, 6-2 win over Paul Capdeville of Chile.

Second seeded American James Blake, however, made an early exit, beaten, 7-6, (7-2), 3-6, 6-1, by Frenchman Antony Dupuis.

Eighth-seeded Juan Monaco of Argentina was also among the early casualties falling, 6-2, 1-6, 7-6, (7-5), to American wild card Mardy Fish.

Roddick, who helped lead the US past Chile in the Davis Cup quarterfinal in California at the weekend, needed just 58 minutes to dispose of Capdeville and remain on course for a sixth consecutive appearance in the US Clay Court final and a fourth title success.

The former world number one arrived in Houston still searching for his first title of the season.

In other first-round action, Vince Spadea of the US advanced with a 6-1, 6-3 decision over Argentine Carlos Berlocq while Scoville Jenkins stopped Russian qualifier Igor Kunitsyn, 7-5, 2-6, 6-3. *Reuters*

PGA plays at longest course in major lore

MIAMI—THE WORLD'S TOP PLAYERS WILL have to tackle the longest course in major history when Medinah Country Club hosts this year's US PGA Championship, organizers said on Tuesday.

A 7,401-yard layout when it staged the 1999 US PGA Championship won by Tiger Woods, the par-72 No. 3 Course at Medinah has been stretched to 7,561 for the Aug. 17-20 tournament.

Whistling Straits in Kohler, Wisconsin was previously the longest major venue, playing 7,514 yards off the back tees when it hosted the 2004 US PGA Championship.

"When the players return here, they're going to really see a different golf course, a golf course that really has more definition," course architect Rees Jones said in a statement issued by the PGA of America.

In a restoration project which began in 2002, Jones removed 300 trees, added new tees or enlarged existing ones; rebuilt some of the greens and redesigned several greenside bunkers.

"We have classic old-style sculptured bunkers which have much more character," Jones added.

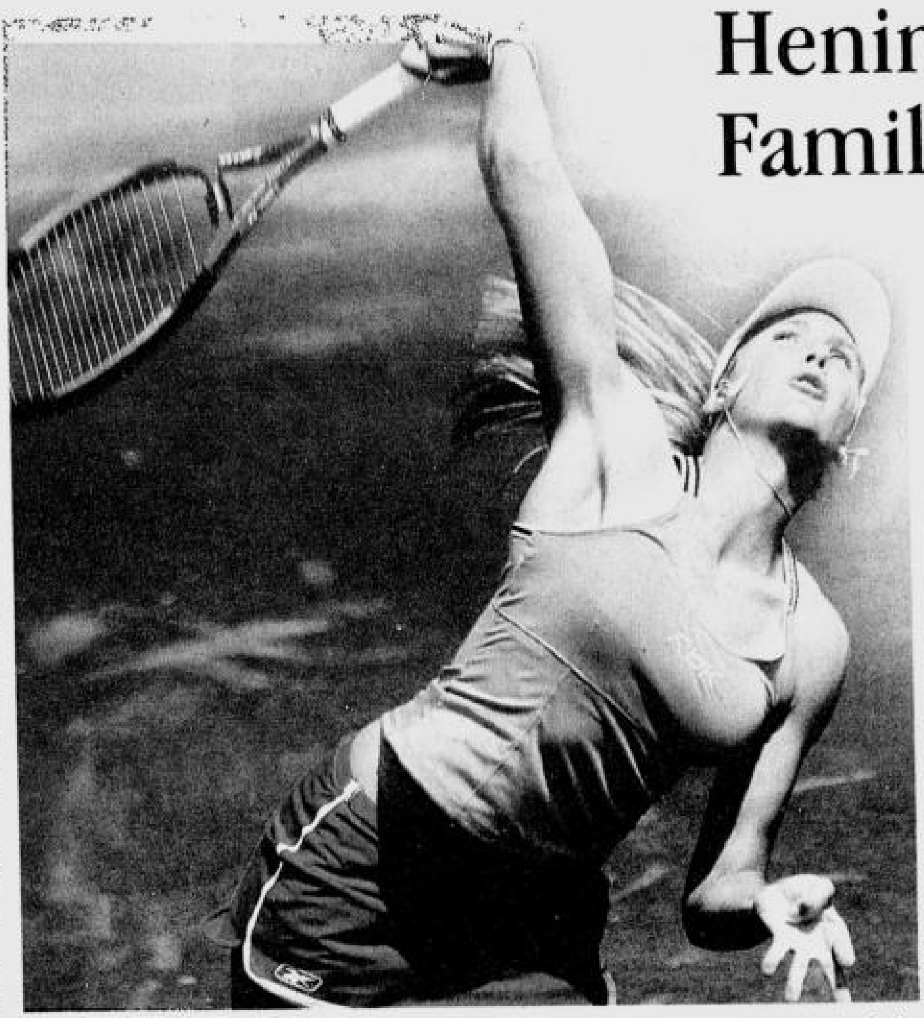
"The bunkers are deeper, the green contours and sizes of the seven greens that we did are complimentary to the greens that were originally here. I'm very pleased with the results." Woods clinched the second major victory of his career by a shot at Medinah in 1999, holding off a late charge by Spaniard Sergio Garcia.

Garcia fired a closing 71 that featured a stunning second shot from behind a tree on the 16th hole.

Medinah Country Club has also staged three US Opens—in 1949, 1975 and 1990—and the 1988 US Senior Open.

World number two Phil Mickelson, who won his third major victory at the US Masters on Sunday, will defend his US PGA Championship crown at Medinah.

The American left-hander won the 2005 US PGA Championship at Baltusrol by a stroke. *Reuters*


NICOLE Vaidisova of the Czech Republic serves to Catalina Castano of Colombia during their second round match of the 2006 Family Circle Cup. REUTERS

Henin-Hardenne beats Family Circle opponent

CHARLESTON, S.C—TOP-SEEDED Justine Henin-Hardenne took the first step toward defending her Family Circle Cup title Tuesday by beating Sybille Bammer of Austria ,6-2, 6-3, in the second round.

Henin-Hardenne also won the title in 2003 and has never lost in 12 matches at the tournament.

In her first clay-court match since her victory in the French Open final last year, Henin-Hardenne had six double-faults.

"It wasn't so easy, and that's what I need right now, this kind of match," Henin-Hardenne said. "That's the kind of match that's going to help me keep going and feel better."

Henin-Hardenne blamed the double-faults on getting used to the court.

"I just had to get used to the lights and everything. It's nothing that special," she said.

Also on Tuesday, third-seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland advanced to the third round with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Meilen Tu of the United States.

In the final match of the night, seventh-seeded Dinara Safina of Russia beat countrywoman Vera Zvonareva, 7-5, 7-5, to advance to the third round.

Catalina Castano of Colombia came back from 5-1 down to beat fifth-seeded Nicole Vaidisova, 7-5, 6-2, in a second-round match. Castano lost five straight games but then won 10 in a row to go up 7-5, 4-0 before the 16-year-old Czech finally held serve.

In first-round matches Tuesday, ninth-seeded Anabel Medina Garrigues needed nine breaks to prevail against Mariana Diaz-Oliva of Argentina, 3-6, 7-5, 6-2, and qualifier Julia Vakulenko of Ukraine upset 10th-seeded Jelena Jankovic, 7-6 (5), 7-5. *AP*

Els hopes to end slump

MIAMI—WITH HIS DISAPPOINTING US Masters finish behind him, Ernie Els has high hopes for this week's Heritage Classic in Hilton Head, South Carolina before taking a month's break.

Despite dropping back into a tie for 27th at Augusta National with a closing 76 after being in position to contend, Els feels he is close to his best form.

"I really felt like I was close to maybe doing something special," the South African world number five said on his official website. "Unfortunately it wasn't to be.

"I played a lot of solid golf and did a lot of things right in my game, but I made some mistakes and I wasn't able to produce the little bit of magic that you need in the majors." Still hunting his first victory of the year, Els plays his final event at Hilton Head until he returns to action in the May 25-28 BMW Championship at Wentworth, where he has his England home.

"It would be great if I could make something special happen this week and get back into my winning ways," said the three-times major champion.

"I don't feel like I'm far away now. I just need to play solid golf and put myself in position to have a shot at winning come Sunday afternoon. That's where we all want to be." The 36-year-old, who missed last year's tournament at Hilton Head, has a good track record in the event with five top-10s in just seven starts.

"The Harbour Town Golf Links, designed by Pete Dye, is one of the players' favourites out here on the PGA Tour and it's a golf course where I've played pretty well over the years," Els said. *AP*

Sugiyama leads Japan

TOKYO—FORMER WORLD doubles number one Ai Sugiyama will spearhead the Japanese team against Switzerland in the Fed Cup tennis World Group II first round here next weekend.

Sugiyama, 30, reached the top spot in October 2000 after winning the US Open and also climbed as high as eighth in the world singles rankings in February 2004.

The Japan Tennis Association on Wednesday also named Aiko Nakamura, ranked 63rd this week, Akiko Morigami, 69th, and Shinobu Asagoe, 75th, for an April 22-23 tie on the Ariake Coliseum hard court. *AFP*

New Balance running clinic under Saret up

SARET

JIM SARET, A CERtified performance enhancement specialist, will be the featured lecturer for a series of running clinics leading up to the New Balance Philippines' Power Race on May 28.

The clinics for beginners and advance runners will be held every Sunday starting on April 16 up to May 21, at 6 a.m. at the Rockwell Center in Makati.

The basics of running and developing the runners to the sport will be emphasized in the beginners' clinic. The advance lectures will focus more on runner's injury and nutrition.

Saret is currently the running consultant of New Balance Philippines and oversees the company's athletic programs for the running clinics.

"What I like about New Balance is its approach toward scientific training of athletes," said Saret, who has a masters degree in sports medicine/athletic training at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Saret is also a speed agility and quickness coach, who also specializes in sports rehabilitation.

For more information and details on the running clinics, log on to www.newbalance.com.ph. To pre-register, contact Maan Oriondo at 898-1933 to 42 or email maan.oriondo@planet-sportsinc.com.

Planet Sports, The Athletes Foot, Air New Zealand, Jam 88.3, Mens Health Magazine, Fitness First, Tokyo Tokyo, Rush, Bullfighter, Cebu Pacific Air, Days Hotel and Crown Regency Hotel support the New Balance Power Race 2006.

CHESS OPENING: Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., president of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, does the ceremonial first move for the women's team eliminations to the Chess Olympiad in Turin, Italy, on May 19 to June 5. With Pichay are WNMs Aices Salvador, Sherily Cua, Kathryn Cruz, Sharcila Cua and, Wreshyl Cuizon; WIMs Cristine Rose Mariano, Beverly Mendoza and Sheerie Joy Lomibao.

Lessons from the World Cup

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

MY RECENT COLUMN ON THE WORLD Cup of football (PDI 3/6/06) elicited this response from retired Ambassador Juanito P. Jarasa. Said he: "I was ambassador to Seoul when Korea and Japan co-hosted the Fifa World Cup, the biggest sport extravaganza on earth, in 2002. Football or soccer is the true universal game for it provokes the biggest impact on a nation's psyche. Hyundai, through the courtesy of its Philippine affiliate, invited me and my wife to the colorful opening ceremony and to see underdog Senegal upset defending champion France in the very first game of the tournament.

"Korea reaped honors in the playing field and as host of the event. With Dutch coach Guus Hiddink dexterously guiding it, the Korean football team blanked Poland and drew with the United States in the elimination round, then proceeded to beat football powers Portugal, Italy and Spain to reach the semifinals. It narrowly lost to eventual runner-up Germany in the semifinal and was edged by Turkey in the battle for third place. Korea became the first Asian country to reach the last four in the World Cup."

According to Jarasa, who served as the country's ambassador to Korea from 1999 to 2001, the Korean government spent $2.7 billion to construct 10 new stadia for the World Cup and for other related matters. Only five of 10 cities which built state-of-the-art stadia have soccer teams. This induced some brickbats which, however, were drowned out by several favorable results. For one, Jarasa continued, Korea was elevated to the same level of perception as its more prosperous co-host Japan. "The unexpected success of the Korean eleven and the massive support of the entire nation for the team not only boosted Korea's image abroad but also fostered patriotism, nationalism, unity and a strong sense of national identity, things which money cannot buy."

Right after the World Cup, the Korean government created a committee which adopted a set of measures aimed at preserving the positive image and goodwill generated by Korea's performance in the football field and successful co-hosting of the event. Among these measures were the use of slogan such as "IT Korea" to put emphasis on the country's advanced information technology; expanding English-language TV and radio programs to make foreigners understand Korea better; raising to 10 the number of Korean brands in the world's top 100 corporate brands by 2010 since Samsung is the only Korean brand in the elite world groupings; dispelling negative images, including the prohibition of the unsightly display of dog meat in the markets; and actively participating in international efforts involving disaster, environment and human rights and hosting more major international conferences in the country. Recently, Korea hosted a conference for members of the International Olympic Committee.

***

REMEMBERING LACSON. This Black Saturday, April 15, marks the 44th death anniversary of Arsenio H. Lacson, "the best mayor Manila ever had." Always a source of pride and inspiration to many, Lacson was not only an exemplary public servant who exposed graft and corruption in the government, but was also an outstanding athlete and sportswriter. He was a football player of the Ateneo team, first as a member of the midget eleven in 1926, moving up to become its varsity player in 1929 and later team captain of Ateneo's undefeated squad in 1930. He also played for star-studded Turba Salvaje and the University of Santo Tomas where he was a law graduate.

In 1934, Lacson played as center halfback of the Philippine team in the 10th Far Eastern Games hosted by Manila together with some of the legendary names in local football such as Sebastian Ugarte, Jose Hernandez, Ramon Alegre, Antonio Villanueva and Joaquin Ortigas.

After graduating from UST, Lacson joined the law office of Sen. Vicente Francisco. He later became an assistant attorney in the justice department and a member of the guerilla movement during the Japanese occupation. After the Pacific War, he became a sportswriter of the Catholic newspaper, "Commonwealth," a hard-hitting columnist and fearless radio commentator. He became a member of Congress, but resigned from the House to run for mayor of Manila, defeating (in his first try) incumbent Manuel de la Fuente. Lacson served for three consecutive terms in 1951, 1955 and 1959.

Lacson led a colorful and stormy life. When he was suspended from office by then President Carlos Garcia, he replaced his car number with a plate "SUSPENDED MAYOR." Lacson died in office on April 15, 1962.

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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OPENING THIS WEEK

Saturday, APRIL 15

D' Lucky Ones

Stars Eugene Domingo, Pokwang, JR Valentin, Sandara Park, Joseph Bitangcol

Directed by Wenn Deramas

The director and studio behind the monster hit "Ang Tanging Ina" whip up another mother-powered comedy. The two moms Tina (Domingo) and Leah (Pokwang) are Vilmanians who play matchmakers to their children, Lucky Boy (Bitangcol) and Lucky Girl (Park). Lunacy and hilarity result when the "moms for all seasons" end up rivals for the heart of hunky Ralph (Valentin). The entire cast had a ball during the shoot, says Valentin, who starred as a cop in the indie film "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros." "We all had fun. *Direk* was there to guide us, but he gave us freedom to be creative on the set. I'm shifting from drama to comedy with this film," Valentin explains.

Tristan & Isolde

Stars James Franco, Sophia Myles, Rufus Sewell

Directed by Kevin Reynolds

Based on a medieval Celtic legend chronicling the doomed affair between star-crossed lovers—an English knight (Franco) and Irish princess (Myles)—this epic love story has "inspired operas by Wagner and sword-and-sorcery movies." Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun-Times thinks "the movie is better than … the studio expected." He explains that this team "has transformed, rather surprisingly, [the myth] into a lean and effective action romance." Allison Benedikt of the Chicago Tribune describes it as "mindless, predictable and mildly entertaining … full of standard period-piece imagery." Bob Longino of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution sums it up as "pretty and boring … a Valentine with no real heart."

Eight Below

Stars Paul Walker, Jason Biggs, Bruce Greenwood

Directed by Frank Marshall

Set in Antarctica and inspired by a true story, this Disney action-adventure rhapsodizes about the amazing bond between members of a scientific expedition and their beloved sled dogs. A mishap had forced the men to abandon their canine companions in the frozen wasteland. Back in civilization, the dogs' master (Walker) tries to raise funds to save them. Wesley Morris of the Boston Globe opines that it's "more than a mushy dog tale … [the dogs] do Oscar-caliber acting. It's the most touching love story about tragically separated sexy beasts since 'Cold Mountain.'" Eleanor Ringel-Gillespie of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution raves that the dogs are "graceful, gorgeous creatures … With the possible exception of Harrison Ford, these paragons of beauty, strength, intelligence and loyalty are as close to old-fashioned heroes as anyone or anything we've seen." E! Online differs, though: "This standardized story isn't worth the trek."

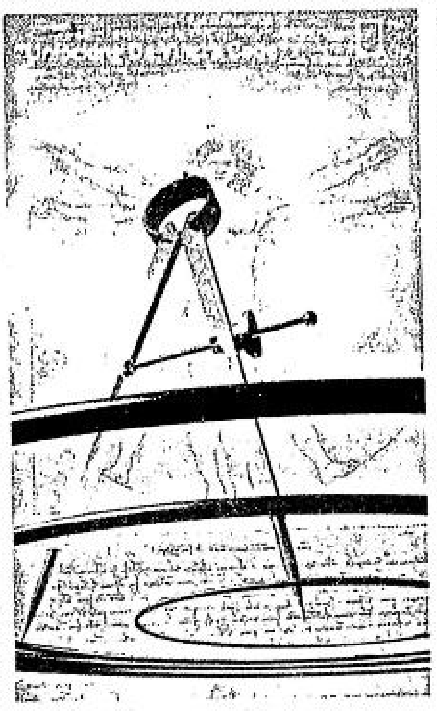
Submerged

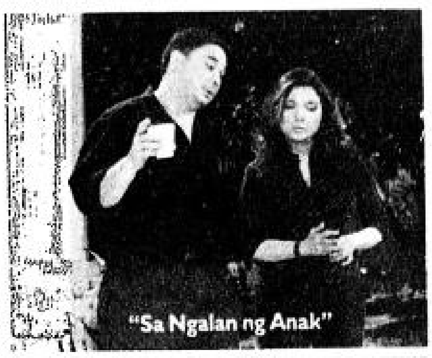
Stars Steven Seagal, Christine Adams, Nick Brimble

Directed by Anthony Hickox

An imprisoned soldier (Seagal) agrees to head an antiterrorist crew,

OPENING/ A2-2





"Sa Ngalan ng Anak"

"Empire"

"Apocalypse"

"The Gospel of Judas"

Provocative TV productions

THE HOLY WEEK/EASTER SEASON has inspired several thought-provoking TV specials on religion and religious history. Here are some of them:

- **"The Gospel of Judas"** premiered on National Geographic Channel on April 9 and was replayed last night. Two more replays are set April 21, 11 p.m. and April 27, 9 p.m. The world knows Judas Escariot as the disciple who betrayed Jesus Christ. This document discovered in the 1970s tells a different story.
- **"Kunin Mo O Diyos"** airs tomorrow, 3 p.m., on ABS-CBN. This 50-minute Lenten offering from the Jesuit Communications Foundation tells the story of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection from the perspective of Mary, His mother. The role of Jesus is played by Christian Bautista; Cooky Chua plays Mary; Noel Cabangon, Judas; and Cathy Aranza, Magdalena; Joel Torre narrates.
- Today from 11 a.m. to 12 noon, Kerygma TV airs a tele-retreat titled "Dakilang Pag-Ibig," hosted by Catholic lay preacher Bo Sanchez and Rissa Singson. Several preachers will share inspiring messages on humility and God's love.
- Tomorrow at 7 p.m., GMA 7 telecasts a

PROVOCATIVE/ A2-4

> A 'tele-retreat,' a tele-movie, a 3-part historical drama and at least five stunning documentaries light up the small screen in the next four weeks

Ain't no mountain high enough

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

MAUNDY THURSDAY OR NOT, we all have our own crosses to bear. But ain't no Mount Calvary high enough to keep Jesus from saving us.

I asked some stars about their own "Calvary" and what it taught them. May the deeper meaning of Lent relentlessly gnaw at our hearts long after all the vacations have been taken, all the rituals have been performed and all our prayers have been answered.

Gary Valenciano

When my family split up in 1978. My mom flew to the United States with me and my three sisters while my brother **Robby** and sisters **Diane** and **Liza** stayed in the Philippines with my dad. This trial taught me to treasure the family I have now and to hang on no matter what, and that with God's help, I could make the right decisions.

Rufa Mae Quinto

When my dad died three years ago. It was painful but it made me stronger and more responsible. I became the mom and dad in the family. I always say I will survive any breakup because I've lost the man I love the most—my dad. Losing boyfriends is nothing compared to that.

Jericho Rosales

Making all the big and major decisions in my life and career, praying and receiving no answer, and having to wait. I have learned that trusting the Lord is never a mistake.

Heart Evangelista

My Lola **Conchita** died a few months ago. She was the kind of *lola* that kept writing to me ever since I was small. She passed away when I was in the US. I didn't have time to visit her when she was sick. I learned that people won't be there forever. Time flies, so we should get to hug a loved one before it's too late.

Jeremy Marquez

Being separated from my mom and sister. I used to be a bad boy. My mom could no longer discipline me in the US so she sent me to my dad here in Manila. It still hurts to this day, but I realize that if she hadn't done that, I would be a mess today. It also hurt my mom but she let me go for my own good. Credit also to my dad for his strictness. I learned that God really does have plans for everyone. We may not see it immediately or agree with His ways, but in the end we will understand

AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN/ A2-2

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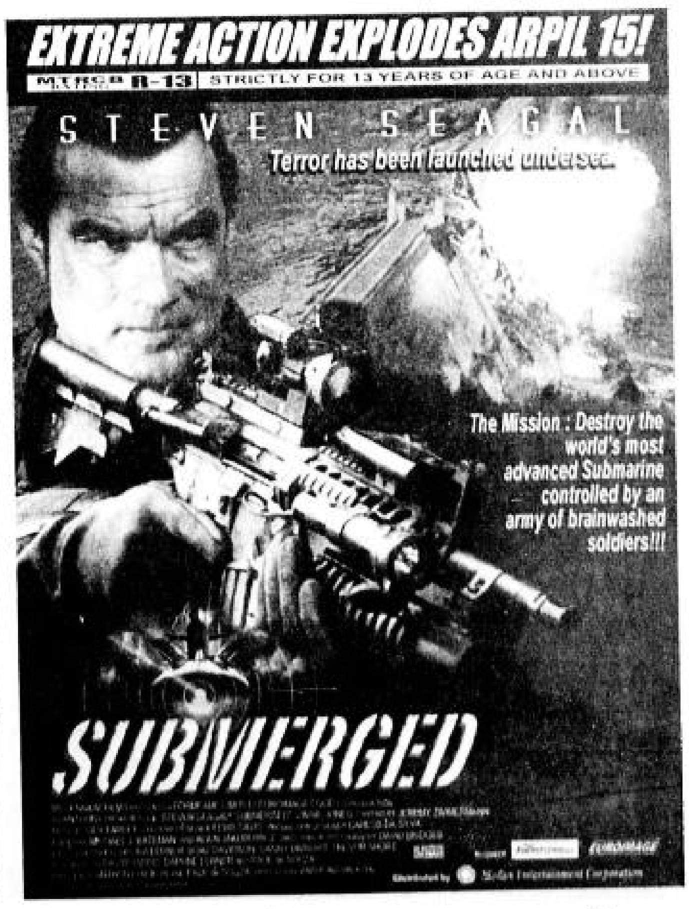

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SUBMERGED

OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

in exchange for freedom and cash. The ragtag troop, however, uncovers a "brainwashing" conspiracy of "Manchurian Candidate" proportions. Vince Leo of Qwipster's Movie Reviews comments that this "slickly produced" flick is a "by-the-numbers vehicle for Seagal … who looks bloated, tired and completely bored." He rants: "No amount of spit and polish will disguise the fact that [this] is a B-movie action film starring a superstar past his prime." Andrew Mackenzie of Beyond Hollywood agrees: "Like fat Elvis, Seagal shows no signs of relenting … Despite its overall lack of quality, there are some good things about it … ruined by its astonishing lack of originality."

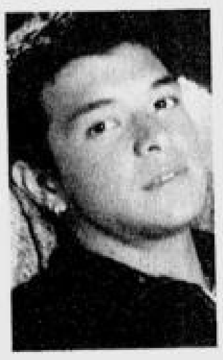
American Soldiers Dateline: Iraq

Stars Curtis Morgan, Zan Calabretta, Jordan Brown
Directed by Sidney J. Furie

In present-day Iraq, a US patrol is ambushed and the soldiers have no choice but to rely on their wits and training to survive in their campaign against Fedayeen insurgents. An IMDb.com reviewer from Sweden gives this film the thumbs-down: "Horrible. The acting is [reminiscent of] 'Baywatch,' but it's set in Iraq. The plot is thin … and lacks realism." According to tribute.ca, the film's director is Canadian and the movie was filmed in Hamilton, Ontario. Furie is also a "graduate of the prestigious Canadian Broadcasting Corporation TV-director talent pool" and has worked on such "stylistic Hollywood delights as 'The Naked Runner' and 'Iron Eagle.'"

Ain't no mountain high enough

From page A2-1


JERICHO Rosales

JURIS Fernandez

JED Madela

SAY Alonzo

and feel His love. I'm working hard right now so I can send for my mom and maybe we can live together again here.

Sunshine Cruz

When my dad died two years ago. It was very sudden. He was only 52, and quite healthy. He had a massive cardiac arrest while playing basketball. I was a daddy's girl, but his passing strengthened my faith. God will never give us trials that we cannot bear.

Jed Madela

When I was started to sing professionally. I was so driven with my passion for singing but there was this nagging reminder that I didn't have the full blessing of my dad to pursue it. I had to prove to him that singing could be a career. He was so against it, I had to keep it a secret. *Pigil lahat ng saya o lungkot na nararamdaman ko kasi di ko ma-share.* I remember crying myself to sleep many times. I prayed very hard and was devoted to Saint Anthony de Padua. One day, my perseverance paid off. My dad finally gave me his blessing. Now he's my number one fan.

Tin Tin Bersola

In high school when my parents separated, it was very difficult for me emotionally. I put myself through college, surviving and earning my keep by going into theater and TV work. I became closer to God. I learned to trust in His will. That experience taught me how to save money and to forgive.

Rachel Ann Go

When I had to choose between my studies and my singing career. I chose singing 'cause the opportunity was there already and it's not something that comes all the time. I promised myself that I would finish my studies. I learned that when opportunity comes, one should grab it. But don't forget the importance of education.

Juris Fernandez (MYMP)

Losing people close to me and regretting not having spent more time with them. God's will, not ours will be done. Always.

Say Alonzo

When I left my family for my boyfriend and then it didn't work out. When I looked, my family was still there to take me back. It taught me that lovers come and go but family is forever. *Sila lang ang magmamahal sa akin ng tunay.*

Christine Reyes

When Ate Ara and I had a big fight. I kept quiet and didn't grant interviews. I wanted the issue to die down. That taught me not to listen to "sulsol" and hearsay because it only makes the problem worse.

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

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2 MOMENTS OF LOVE / V FOR VENDETTA

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 ICE AGE-2
2 BASIC INSTINCT-2
3 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
TRISTAN & ISOLDE (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 (DOLBY) MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) ICE AGE-2
4 (DOLBY) EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 BANDIDAS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 BASIC INSTINCT 2

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
5 BASIC INSTINCT-2

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 VENOM
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 AEON FLUX
4 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 BASIC INSTINCT-2
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
3 CHINESE TALL STORY

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 ICE AGE-2
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

THEATRES
HE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan. Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE-2

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
MOMENTS OF LOVE
V FOR VENDETTA
RESERVED
RESERVED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 ICE AGE-2
2 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 16 BLOCKS

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 16 BLOCKS
2 VENOM

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 BIYAS SA PARAISO NG KASALANAN
3 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT
4 (DTS) DEVILS IN THE DEEP

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 NAG AAPOY NA DAGAT
3 EIGHTS BELOW (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 ULTRAVIOLET

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 ICE AGE-2
3 VENOM
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BASIC INSTICNT-2
2 NAGAAPOY NA DAGAT

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

OPENS APRIL 15
MTRCB RATING G
ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL, FRIENDSHIP, AND ADVENTURE EVER TOLD.
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT
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RADHA MITCHELL
SILENT HILL
COMING SOON
BASED ON THE #1 SURVIVAL GAME FROM KONAMI

Stage parents revel in reflected glory

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NOW THAT TALENT SEARCHES HAVE become a very big deal on television, a new breed of disconcerting and discombobulating characters has been engendered: stage parents.

Now, stage parents have been with us for generations, ever since the first child actor trod the boards or performed cute antics in front of a flickering silent film camera. But television has compounded their numbers, as well as their negative influence and effect.

Time was when young talents' parents knew their place and stayed out of the TV cameras' reach. They were content to enjoy the fruits of their breadwinning kids' labors, and left the public appearances to their stellar children.

These days, however, TV talent searches regularly take reaction shots of young contestants' parents as they hysterically and lividly react to their kids' performances.

To be sure, some of these reaction shots are taken for bitchy fun's sake, to show how desperate some stage parents are for their children to do well, so they can continue to enjoy the perks of their success.

But TV is so powerful that even such cynical and derisive shots eventually make minor celebrities of the stage parents themselves.

In time, they begin to be recognized by some members of the viewing public, and they revel in the glory, reflected though it may be.

After that, it's only a matter of time before the stage parents start staging on-camera brawls between themselves, and they're asked to guest on celebrity talk shows to dump their vitriol on viewers whose hunger for gossip and scandal has become insatiable.

If they can't watch stars savaging each other, even non-stars like stage parents will do.

Is there any way out of this sequence of dispiritedly diminishing returns? There sure is:

First, TV shows should stop taking reaction shots of all stage parents. Let them remain out of camera range, where they belong.

Next, put an end to the sad practice of child performers being forced to become their families' breadwinners.

Parents have the responsibility to make money for their children, not the other way around.

To make sure this happens, producers should pay the kids' talent fees or prize, not to their parents, but into a trust fund for the child performers themselves. This sounds harsh and insensitive, but if some child talents have to be protected from their own parents, so be it.

On Channel [V]

On Saturday on Channel [V] (1 to 3 p.m.), don't miss Andrew G's Excellent Adventure as he travels around the world to interview some of the biggest musical stars—**Madonna**, **The Darkness**, **Franz Ferdinand** and **Kanye West**.

"The Wild"

Meet the stellar cast of animals in the new animated feature, "The Wild": Samson the Lion is the "mane attraction" at the New York Zoo.

Ryan is Samson's rebellious teenage son. When he sets out to experience life in the wild for himself, Samson and his buddies have to save him from himself.

Benny is Samson's best friend, a street-savvy New York squirrel. Despite his puny size, he's a big thinker when it comes to love: He sets his sights on a giraffe.

Bridget is the 12-foot giraffe in question. She's fiercely independent, but she helps Samson save his son with her towering height and pragmatism.

Nigel is the zoo's cute and cuddly merchandise megastar, but he longs to escape his cute image, which is encouraged by his teddy bear likeness.

Kazar the wildebeest makes his move to the top of the food chain.

Larry the Anaconda is the longest animal in the zoo—but he's a bit short when it comes to common sense.

2006 opera season

The Philippine Opera Company opens its 2006 season in July. With Terrence McNally's "Masters Class," a 1996 Tony Award-winning play about a master class for singers taught by opera's grand dame, **Maria Callas**.

Next, in September, comes a modern staging of Charles Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet," an opera based on Shakespeare's immortal tragedy.

POC's Christmas offering is a fantasy adaptation of the fairy-tale world of Mozart's "Magic Flute," with puppetry and animation.

The company's concert series will lead off in July with "Operanow 2," an evening of music by Puccini, with top Filipino singers and the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring selections from "Madame Butterfly."

Feedback

Conclusion of Ms Edy G. Reyes' notes on no-no's on TV: "Harassment: It is not only the vulgarity (brown or green jokes) that concerns us viewers, but also the degrading words hurled by some TV hosts at their contestants or guests—to the point of belittling the aptitude of these people, who are goaded to commit stupid booboos and made to suffer and cry. Such blithe disregard for people's self-esteem.

"Finally, I believe that management was right to terminate the services of the SexBomb Dancers on 'Eat Bulaga.' Their no-show was clearly a breach of contract."

FEEDBACK

Missing the pines

From R.L. Penson (rlpenson@telstra.com) Brisbane, Australia:

The mayor of Baguio should focus on getting rid of jeepneys whose smoke belching has overcome the city's sweet pine scent. After losing Baguio's top attraction, he wants to rid the city of the second best thing about it—relaxation and recreation. Then again, of course, Holy Week and the reasons that we Filipinos observe it with devotion should never be forgotten.

TRAPPED BEHIND ENEMY LINES.
A WAR FOUGHT WITHOUT RULES.
CURTIS MORGAN
ZAN CALABRETTA
JORDAN BROWN
EDDIE DELLA SIEPE

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G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED	3 CLOSED	4 CLOSED
G4	GLORIETTA 4	1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED	3 THX CLOSED GUARANTEED SEATS	
		4 CLOSED	5 CLOSED	6 CLOSED	7 CLOSED
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED		
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 THX CLOSED GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX CLOSED GUARANTEED SEATS		
		3 CLOSED GUARANTEED SEATS	4 CLOSED GUARANTEED SEATS	5 CLOSED GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX CLOSED	2 CLOSED		
		3 CLOSED	4 CLOSED	5 CLOSED	
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED	3 CLOSED	4 CLOSED
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED		
		3 CLOSED	4 CLOSED	5 CLOSED	

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Easter Bunny Special by Repertory Philippines April 16, 2006	Easter Fun at Town April 16, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Ayala Center Cebu's Easter Event & Kiddo's 1st Year Anniversary April 16, 2006	Cartoon Network Summer Camp April 22, 2006

GREENBELT
Bossa Nova with SITTI
April 19, 2006

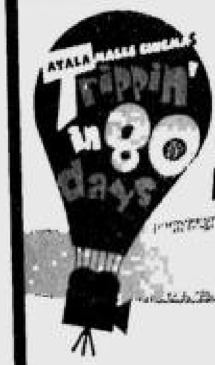
Greenbelt Onstage
Repertory Philippines presents TWO & TWO MAKE SEX
at REP's Globe Theater - April 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, May 5, 6 & 7
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM
Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's
Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

GREENBELT 1 Onstage AYALA CENTER

The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays and corporate events is now accepting bookings for June to July 2006

For bookings, pls. call Lito at 757-3863 or Liza at 753-7862.



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**Promo starts on April 15, 2006

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EVENT CALENDAR · SM CENTER stage · **EVENT CALENDAR**

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Ngayon at Kailanman
APRIL 22, 2006
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CINEMA 3
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(P600, P800, P1200)

BAMBOO
LIVE CONCERT
APRIL 21, 2006
FRIDAY • 8:30 PM
SM MEGAMALL
CINEMA 9
Tickets at
(P180, P280, P380)

Movies, Popcorn and Love Songs
MAY13, 2006
SATURDAY• 8:30 PM
SM NORTH EDSA
CINEMA 9
Tickets at
(P300, P500, P800)

NORTH EDSA

Cueshé
...Can't let you go
APRIL 21, 2006
FRIDAY • 8:30 PM
SM NORTH EDSA
CINEMA 1
Tickets at
(P180, P280, P380)

Tickets available at TICKETWORLD 891-5610/ 891-9999

SM CITY BAGUIO

1.ULTRAVIOLET 2.EIGHT BELOW 3.SYRIANA 4.ICE AGE 2

ANNOUNCEMENT

In observation of the Holy Week, SM Cinema will be closed on
April 13 (Maundy Thursday) and
April 14 (Good Friday)

See you at the movies on
April 15 (Black Saturday) and April 16 (Easter Sunday)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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GALLERIA 632-1116

1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN • THX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

2 ICE AGE 2
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

3 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

4 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00

5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10.00

6 SHE'S THE MAN
12.50 3:10 5:30 7.50 10:00

7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8 BANDIDAS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

9 JUST FRIENDS
1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

10 BASIC INSTINCT 2
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 ICE AGE 2
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 JUST FRIENDS 12:00 1:40 3:20
BASIC INSTINCT 2 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 BANDIDAS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5.00 7:30 10:00

7 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8183 / 682-8189

1 JUST FRIENDS
1:00 3:00 5.00 7:00 9:00

2 ICE AGE 2
12:30 2.45 5.00 7:15 9:15

3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
12:40 2.45 4:50 6:55 9:00

4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
1:00 3.40 6.20 9.00

5 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
11:00 1:00 4:00 6:00 9:00

6 BASIC INSTINCT 2
12.00 2:20 4.40 7:00 9:15

7 BANDIDAS
12:00 2:20 4:40 7:00 9:15

8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
11:40 2:00 4:20 6.40 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
5 ICE AGE 2
6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 BANDIDAS
2 ICE AGE 2
3 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE Sneak Preview

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2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 ICE AGE 2
2 VENOM
3 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 V FOR VENDETTA

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 ICE AGE 2
2 NANNY MCPHEE
3 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
4 ICE AGE 2

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-6270

1 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Sneak Preview
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
6 ULTRAVIOLET

BACOLOD (034) 441-0463 (034) 441-0456

1 VENOM
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 ICE AGE 2
4 SAHGGY DOG
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 NORTH COUNTRY
4 EIGHT BELOW Sneak Preview
5 ICE AGE 2
6 VENOM

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"THE KNIGHTS Templar"

Provocative

From page A2-1

celebrity-studded made-for-TV movie, "Sa Ngalan ng Anak," produced by The Christian Broadcasting Network Asia and supervised by Coney Reyes, written by Raquel Villavicencio and directed by Maryo delos Reyes.

The movie tells the story of a Filipino family whose "secret sins," are finally uncovered.

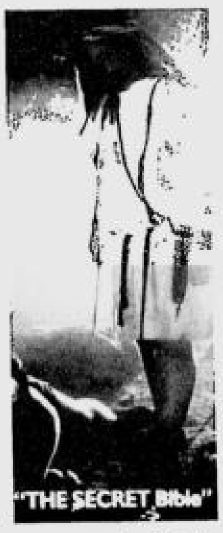
- On April 23 at 9 p.m. "Empire"—a three-part drama series set in Rome, 44 B.C.—premieres on the Hallmark Channel with parts 1 and 2. Part 3 airs the next night at 10. The great conqueror Julius Caesar returns from his triumph in Spain to a neglected, poverty-stricken republic and a senate corrupted by power. The fate of the Roman Empire is upon the shoulders of his 17-year-old nephew Octavius.

'Secret Bible Week'

On National Geographic starting May 1 is "Secret Bible Week," which consists of four features:

"The Knights Templar," May 1, 9 p.m., is about "the most secret society in the world" said to own the Holy Grail, to have known Jesus' bloodline and discovered the New World ... a century before Columbus! Repeats: May 6, 9 p.m. and May 13, 12 noon.

- "Rivals of Jesus" premieres May 2, 9 p.m. He healed the sick, fed the hungry and raised the dead. Three days after his death, he is said to have risen again. He was Apollonius of Tyana, just one of several preachers and miracle-workers of the First Century who rivaled the fame of Jesus Christ. Repeats: May 6, 10 p.m. and May 13, 1 p.m.

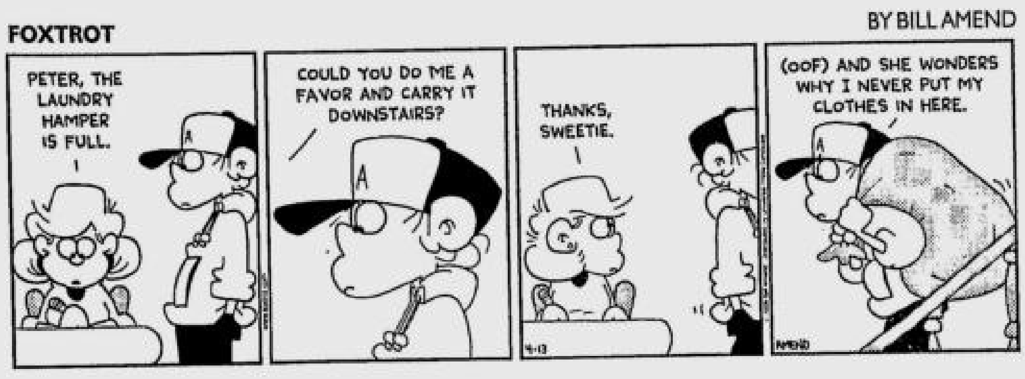


"THE SECRET Bible"

- "Apocalypse" premieres May 3, 9 p.m. Tsunamis, earthquakes, wars and disasters—are they the "End Days" prophesied in the Bible?
- "Unlocking Da Vinci's Code" airs (Part 1) May 4, 9 p.m. and (Part 2) May 5, 9 p.m. Dan Brown's fictional best-selling novel claims, among other things, that Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife, that they had a child and that their descendants live among French and British nobility today.

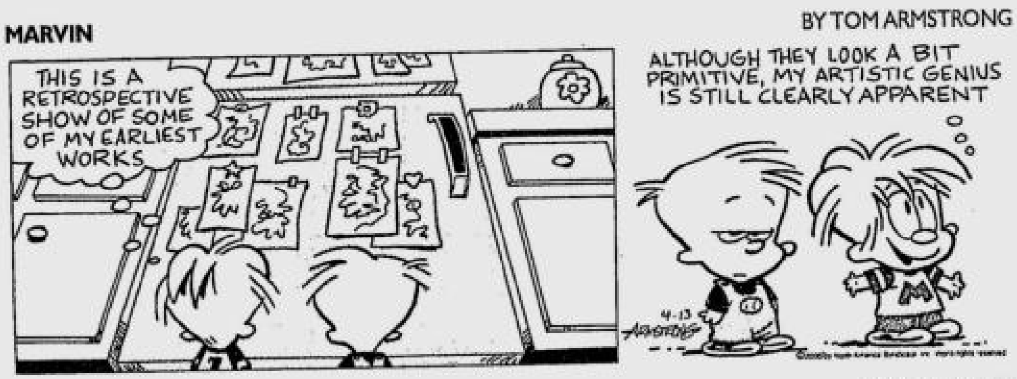
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


PETER, THE LAUNDRY HAMPER IS FULL.
COULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR AND CARRY IT DOWNSTAIRS?
THANKS, SWEETIE.
(OOF) AND SHE WONDERS WHY I NEVER PUT MY CLOTHES IN HERE.
4-13
AMEND

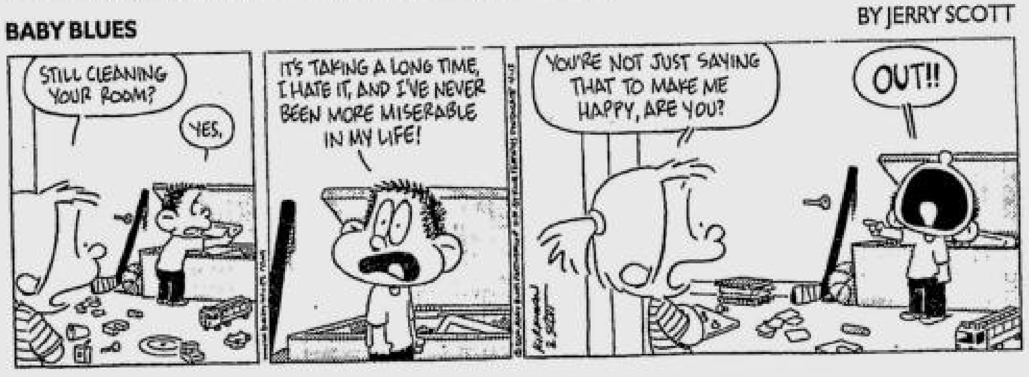
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THIS IS A RETROSPECTIVE SHOW OF SOME OF MY EARLIEST WORKS
ALTHOUGH THEY LOOK A BIT PRIMITIVE, MY ARTISTIC GENIUS IS STILL CLEARLY APPARENT
4-13
ARMSTRONG

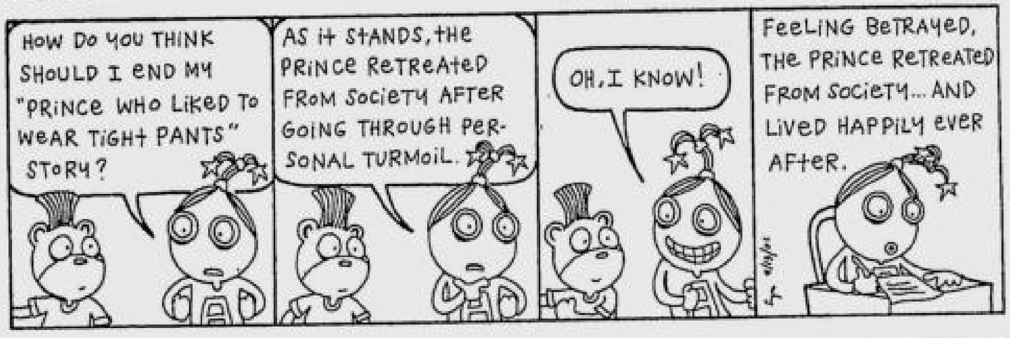
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


STILL CLEANING YOUR ROOM?
YES.
IT'S TAKING A LONG TIME, I HATE IT, AND I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE MISERABLE IN MY LIFE!
YOU'RE NOT JUST SAYING THAT TO MAKE ME HAPPY, ARE YOU?
OUT!!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HOW DO YOU THINK SHOULD I END MY "PRINCE WHO LIKED TO WEAR TIGHT PANTS" STORY?
AS IT STANDS, THE PRINCE RETREATED FROM SOCIETY AFTER GOING THROUGH PERSONAL TURMOIL.
OH, I KNOW!
FEELING BETRAYED, THE PRINCE RETREATED FROM SOCIETY... AND LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're experimental and pioneering. You march to the beat of your own drum. Because of this, others sometimes think you're eccentric. You have your own standards and remain true to them. You're certainly not afraid to voice your opinion, even if it's unpopular. Expect increased solitude in the year ahead in order to learn something important and valuable.

Birthdate of: Thomas Jefferson, third US president; Al Green, singer; Jonathan Brandis, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Someone's comments rankle you. You feel as if what he or she said is a criticism of you, and worse yet, you fear it might be true. (There's the sting.) Let it go.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Avoid arguments with friends and groups today. They could become nasty. You will not persuade others to agree with you, so don't even try.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Definitely avoid debates with bosses, VIPs, parents and the police. Power struggles are occurring everywhere today. Stay detached. (You need this like a fish needs a bicycle.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Someone might try to convince you about something. You don't have to go along with this. Stand your ground. No one can tell you what to believe in.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't get excited about things today. It's the Full Moon, and on top of that, Mercury is square with Pluto, which means that people are at loggerheads. Stay clear of fights! Zip your lip.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Partners or friends might be upset today about money, possessions or how to handle something that is to be shared. Someone is unhappy. If it's you, wait until tomorrow to voice your opinions.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might suggest ideas about how to make improvements and reforms where you work. You might also have similar ideas about how to improve your health. Nevertheless, don't force others to agree with you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Parents must be patient with children today. Everybody is more excited and more emotional whenever it's a Full Moon. Therefore, be loving and kind.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Avoid family quarrels today. Minor disagreements can turn into big ego battles! Don't try to persuade others to agree with you. Don't let anyone bully you, either.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're on a rampage today. You think you're right, and you're determined to convince others that you know what you're talking about. Don't even bother! It's the Full Moon. Lighten up.

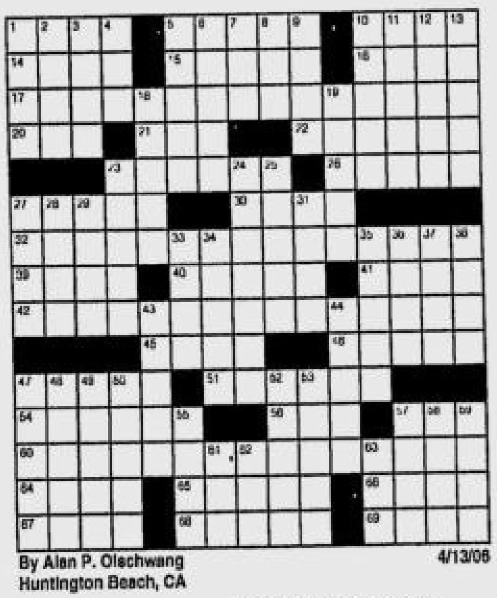
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're obsessed about something today. You feel you have to have your way. This feeling will pass very quickly. Be cool.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Don't try to tell others how to live their lives, even if you think you know best. Basically this is just meddling.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Profusion
5 God of Islam
10 Nail smoother
14 Paquin of "The Squid and the Whale"
15 Intermesh
16 Mild Dutch cheese
17 Start of Evan Esar quote
20 Bagel topper
21 Short drink
22 Dollar bill artist
23 Wickerwork material
26 Spread wide
27 Sneakier
30 Pleasant
32 Part 2 of quote
39 Campus sports org.
40 North of Mexico
41 Sty denizens
42 Part 3 of quote
45 Words of denial
46 Rot-resistant wood
47 Having wings
51 Danish seaport
54 Former Turkish titles
56 Me to Pierre
57 Gray or Candler
60 End of quote
64 Colorful mount
65 Lauder of cosmetics
66 Middle section of a scherzo
67 Math course
68 Extends across
69 Warren of the NFL

DOWN
1 Marsh bird
2 Data
3 Cameo stone
4 The way to Lao-tzu
5 In the least
6 Bounded
7 WC
8 St. crosser
9 Fashion lines
10 Tired of it all
11 Model of perfection
12 Preminger film
13 Without content
18 Take away weaponry
19 Befuddled
23 Showed again
24 Automaton
25 Capone henchman
27 Out of __ (discordant)
28 Mad as a Spaniard
29 Chinese currency
31 Atkins or Huntley
33 Centerward
34 Great, in a way
35 Oar holder
36 __ better watch out!
37 Grimm figure
38 Exploiter
43 Shaq of the NBA
44 Arafat of the PLO
47 Separated
48 Work
49 Brazilian palm
50 Leather strip
52 Tunnell of the NFL
53 "The Highwayman" poet
55 Takes to court
57 Taj Mahal site
58 Tanker or cruiser
59 On the peak of
61 Recipe abbr.
62 Greek letter
63 "__ a Wonderful Life"


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69

By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

4/13/06

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

L	O	F	T	S	■	F	S	T	O	P	■	T	D	S
E	R	A	S	E	■	O	P	E	R	A	■	A	M	I
M	O	R	A	L	■	L	U	R	E	S	■	R	I	P
■	■	M	R	A	N	D	M	R	S	S	M	I	T	H
T	A	T	■	■	A	S	E	A	■	■	A	F	R	O
E	G	E	S	T	S	■	■	■	B	A	F	F	I	N
E	R	A	T	O	■	A	G	O	U	T	I	■	■	■
M	O	M	A	N	D	P	O	P	S	T	O	R	E	S
■	■	■	T	E	T	R	A	S	■	A	S	O	N	E
B	L	A	I	R	S	■	■	■	G	R	O	U	T	S
E	E	R	O	■	■	H	A	V	I	■	■	L	O	S
M	A	A	N	D	P	A	K	E	T	T	L	E	■	■
A	P	B	■	R	O	B	I	N	■	O	U	T	R	E
T	E	L	■	A	L	I	T	O	■	E	L	T	O	N
A	R	E	■	M	A	D	A	M	■	S	L	E	E	T

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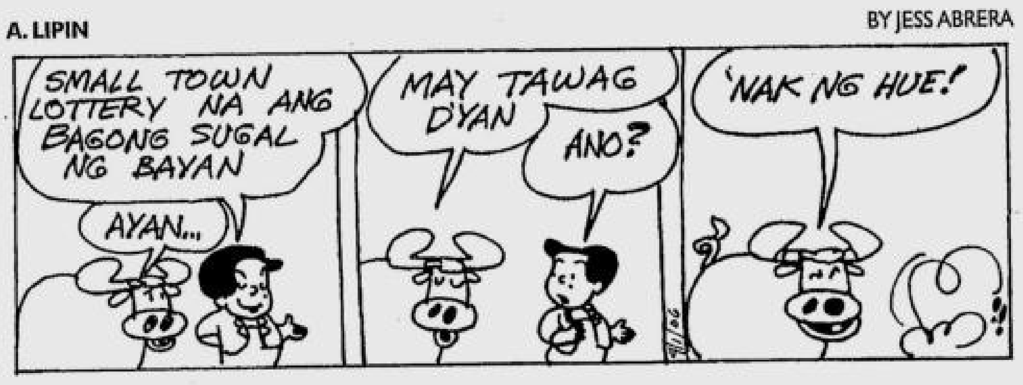
4/13/06

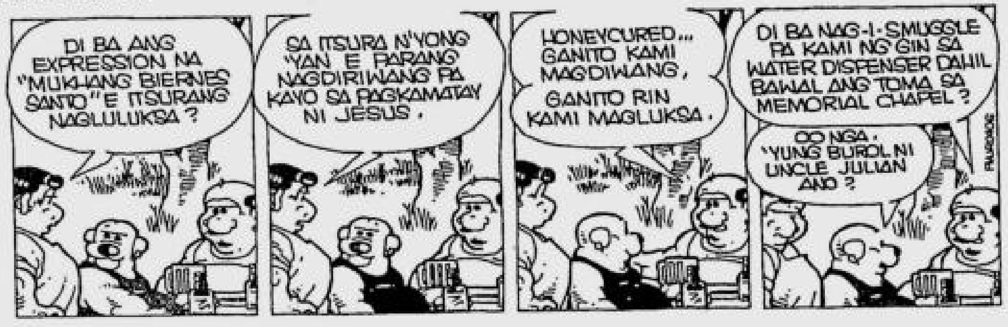
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SMALL TOWN LOTTERY NA ANG BAGONG SUGAL NG BAYAN
AYAN...
MAY TAWAG DYAN
ANO?
'NAK NG HUE!

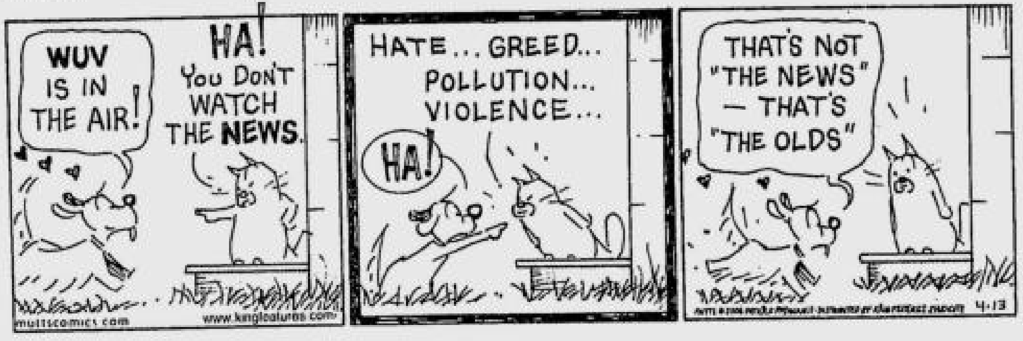
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DI BA ANG EXPRESSION NA "MUKHANG BIERNES SANTO" E ITSURANG NAGLULUKSA?
SA ITSURA N'YONG 'YAN E PARANG NAGDIRIWANG PA KAYO SA PAGKAMATAY NI JESUS.
HONEYCURED... GANITO KAMI MAGDIWANG, GANITO RIN KAMI MAGLUKSA.
DI BA NAG-I-SMUGGLE PA KAMI NG GIN SA WATER DISPENSER DAHIL BAWAL ANG TOMA SA MEMORIAL CHAPEL?
OO NGA. 'YUNG BUROL NI UNCLE JULIAN AKO?

MUTTS

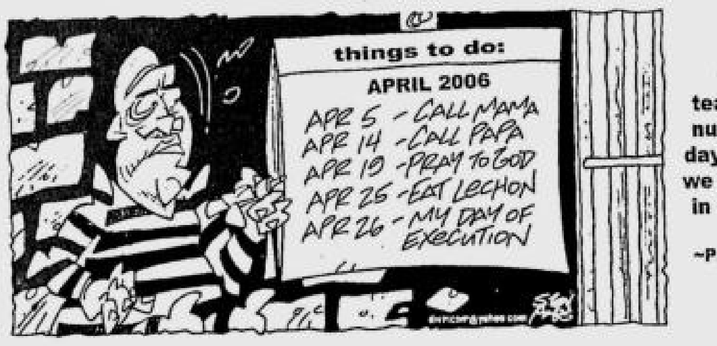
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WUV IS IN THE AIR!
HA! YOU DON'T WATCH THE NEWS.
HATE... GREED... POLLUTION... VIOLENCE...
HA!
THAT'S NOT "THE NEWS" — THAT'S "THE OLDS"
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
4-13

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ISANG ARAW, SA LOOB NG DEATH ROW
....

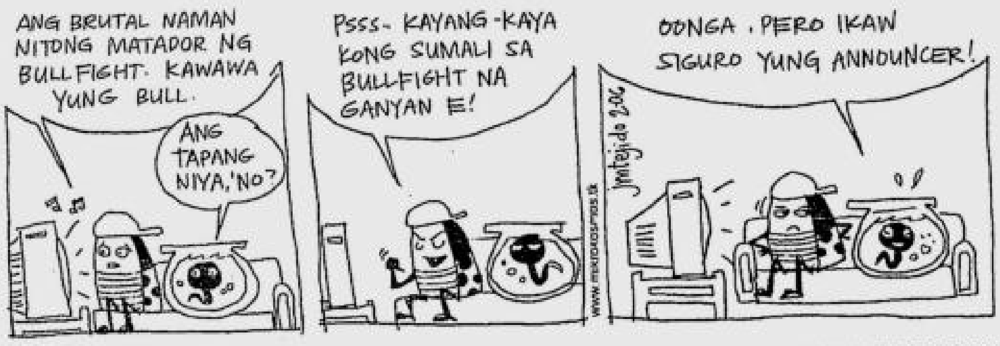

things to do:
APRIL 2006
APR 5 - CALL MAMA
APR 14 - CALL PAPA
APR 19 - PRAY TO GOD
APR 25 - EAT LECHON
APR 26 - MY DAY OF EXECUTION

"Lord, teach us to number our days, so that we may grow in wisdom."

~Psalm 90:12

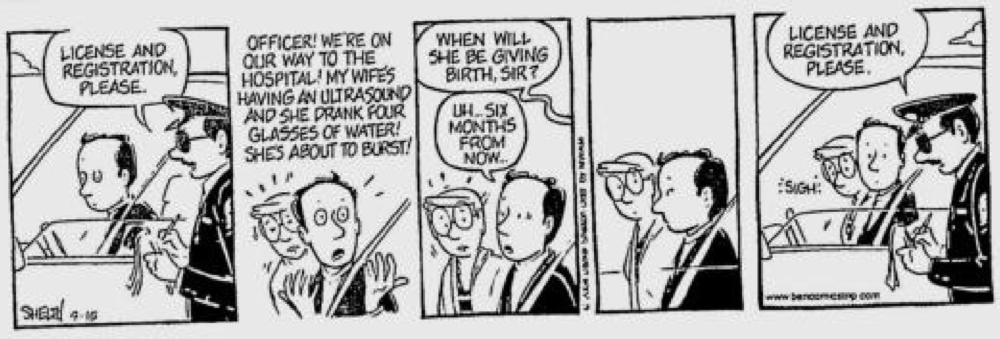
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG BRUTAL NAMAN NITONG MATADOR NG BULLFIGHT. KAWAWA YUNG BULL.
ANG TAPANG NIYA, 'NO?
PSSS- KAYANG-KAYA KONG SUMALI SA BULLFIGHT NA GANYAN E!
OONGA. PERO IKAW SIGURO YUNG ANNOUNCER!
jmtejido 2.06

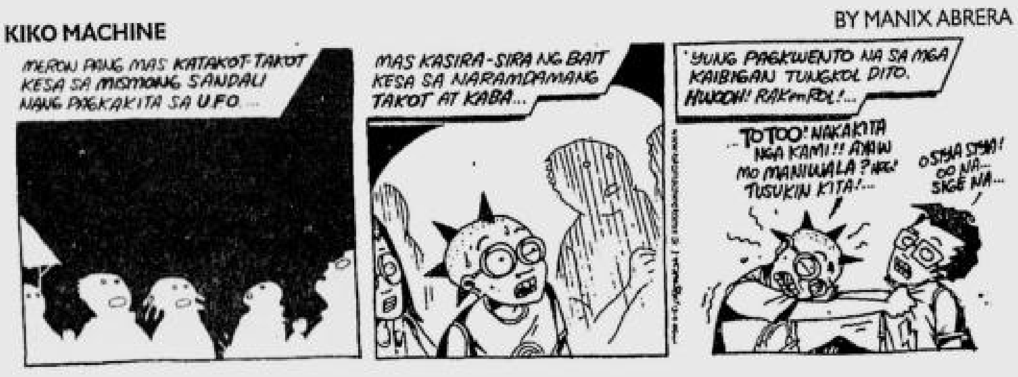
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


LICENSE AND REGISTRATION, PLEASE.
OFFICER! WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO THE HOSPITAL! MY WIFE'S HAVING AN ULTRASOUND AND SHE DRANK FOUR GLASSES OF WATER! SHE'S ABOUT TO BURST!
WHEN WILL SHE BE GIVING BIRTH, SIR?
UH.. SIX MONTHS FROM NOW..
LICENSE AND REGISTRATION, PLEASE.
SIGH
www.bencomicstrip.com

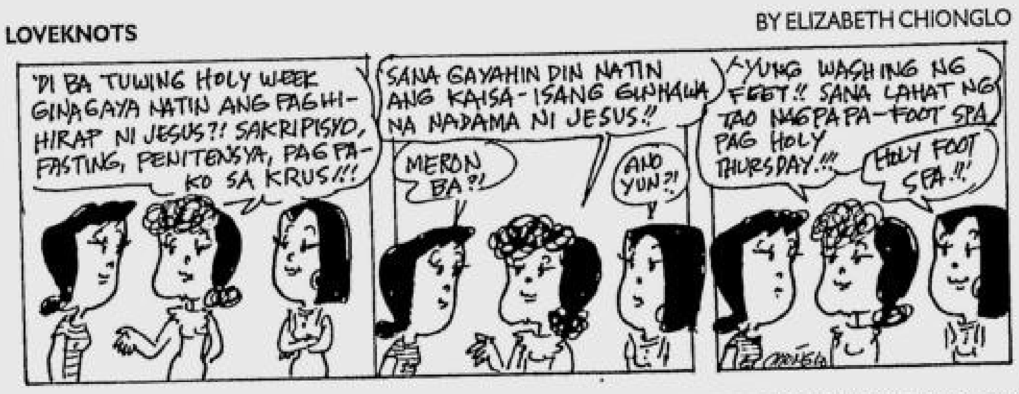
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


MERON PANG MAS KATAKOT-TAKOT KESA SA MISMONG SANDALI NANG PAGKAKITA SA U.F.O....
MAS KASIRA-SIRA NG BAIT KESA SA NARAMDAMANG TAKOT AT KABA...
'YUNG PAGKWENTO NA SA MGA KAIBIGAN TUNGKOL DITO. HWOOH! RAKenROL!...
TOTOO! NAKAKITA NGA KAMI!! AYAW MO MANIWALA? HA?! TUSUKIN KITA!...
OSIGE SIGE! OO NA.. SIGE NA...

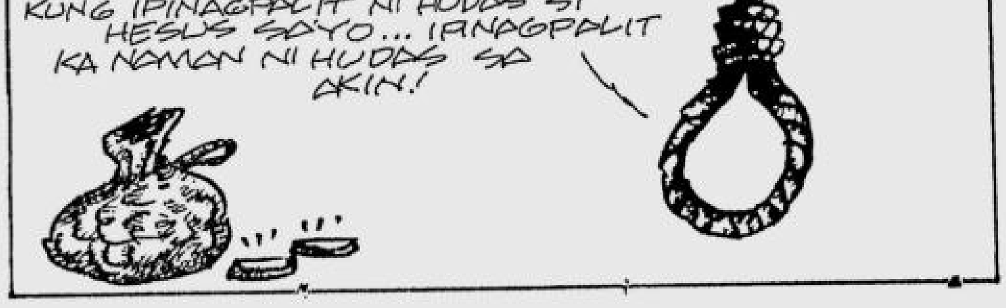
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


'DI BA TUWING HOLY WEEK GINAGAYA NATIN ANG PAGHIHIRAP NI JESUS?! SAKRIPISYO, FASTING, PENITENSYA, PAGPAPAKO SA KRUS!!!
SANA GAYAHIN DIN NATIN ANG KAISA-ISANG GINHAWA NA NADAMA NI JESUS!!
MERON BA?!
ANO YUN?!
'YUNG WASHING NG FEET!! SANA LAHAT NG TAO NAGPAPA-FOOT SPA PAG HOLY THURSDAY!!!
HOLY FOOT SPA!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KUNG IPINAGPALIT NI HUDAS SI HESUS SAYO... IPINAGPALIT KA NAMAN NI HUDAS SA AKIN!

ENTERTAINMENT

Art, jewelry and the Single girl

By Marinel R. cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

BUTTERFLY wings costume she wore to a Halloween party.

ACTRESS AND COMMERCIAL MODEL Heart Evangelista's ultimate dream is to hold an art exhibit some day.

Not many people know that the chinky-eyed beauty has been sketching and painting since she was this high. As a matter of fact, Heart, 21, had to be pulled away from watching TV for this interview. Being shown on HBO on the afternoon of INQUIRER Entertainment's visit was James Ivory's "Surviving Picasso," with Anthony Hopkins playing the role of the late artist Pablo Picasso.

"I like painting girls," Heart said in an interview at her Makati City home. "But [the other aspects] depend on my frame of mind. I paint colorful pictures when I'm happy. I use gloomy colors when I'm sad."

The actress says it's somewhat like dressing up. "When I feel bad, I dress up. A good pair of shoes and a really nice bag can boost one's confidence."

OUT OF THE CLOSET

ART PIECES

"This picture of myself was the first painting after Echo (Jericho Rosales, her boyfriend and co-star in 'Panday') and I got together. This is really special to me. I was very happy when I painted this.

"On my sketchpad is a pencil picture of Echo's bandmate, Dan. I drew it at the beach; that's why it's very blue.

"I also drew this picture of my makeup artist, Yolly. I made her sit still for a while. *Biglaan lang ito.*"

BOOK

"Right now, I'm reading Stormie Omartian's 'Just Enough Light for the Step I'm On." It's the perfect book for a baby [Born Again] Christian like me."

WHITE sequined chiffon dress has "the Bollywood look" that she likes

DRESSES

"This white sequined chiffon dress is from Singapore. It's got this Bollywood look that I really like. I've not used this here, but I've worn it to the wedding of a famous wushu trainer in Singapore. Since the fabric is really thin, I wore a skin-toned camisole underneath.

"I bought this dress in Hong Kong after a shoot. It's really during last-minute shopping sprees that I get to buy things that I like. This one is very proper, very respectable.

"This Betsey Johnson dress is from San Francisco (shows a bronze-colored satin dress with pink embroidery). It's very versatile. I can wear it on a regular day or during a formal occasion. All I have to do is change my shoes.

"I asked Oscar dela Renta to make this light brown evening gown for me. He's one of my favorite designers. I wore this for a Guillermo Mendoza Memorial Awards show. I plan to wear it again."

BLACK leather Dior she uses only for special events.

TOPS

"I got this white embroidered halter top during my trip to Hawaii in February. I love its color and bohemian look. I like the way it hangs on my body—not too tight but not too loose, either.

"My favorite T-shirt says: 'I love my bag and dog.' This T-shirt says it all about me. I really love my dogs, even though I have asthma."

JEANS AND SKIRTS

"I hardly wear jeans. I don't know why it's so hard for me to find the right pair. That's why when I got hold of this Ultra-low rise from Gap, I couldn't let go.

"On the other hand, I'm a skirt and shorts lover. I like them in denim fabric. I get most of them from Top Shop and Zara. Not only are they comfy, they're also very stylish."

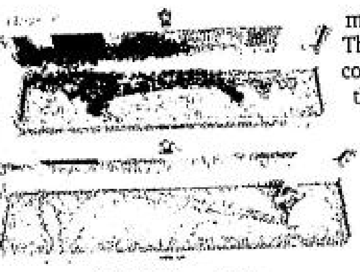
SHOES

"My current favorite is a pair of white high-heeled slip-ons from Gucci. I could wear it with almost anything. It's great during summer. This is only a month old.

"My black Prada pair is a gift from Echo. I call them my outstanding black heels. I saw this at the Prada store in Greenbelt. I wanted to get them for myself but he insisted on buying for me. I was experiencing one of the most difficult times in my life when Echo gave this to me. There was this negative talk going around ... Echo said this should remind me to keep walking proudly.

"This pair of brown boots was very hard to find. It took me a whole day of walking through the busy streets of Hong Kong. It's made of soft leather and the style is unique.

"MKNY provides most of my slippers and sneakers. This pair of slippers is very comfy. I use it whenever I'm on the set of 'Panday.' I wear rubber shoes when I want to go really casual, *'yung walang pakialam.*"



GIFTS from Echo

BAGS

"I love bags, like this one black leather number from Dior, though I don't use it often. I save it for very special events. I feel it attracts too much attention.

"The one I use frequently is this blue leather Luis Vuitton. It can go with anything, especially jeans. Another favorite is this brown Luella bag that I got in San Francisco. I think this brand is not sold locally yet. I first saw this from Hollywood actresses Sarah Jessica Parker and Sienna Miller.

"I'm guilty of spending a lot on bags. I made a promise to *Tita* Angeli that I won't buy anymore bags—even though they're tax deductible. To girls who love bags but are on a tight budget, make sure you get sturdy ones. That way, you don't have to buy a lot. Guess and Girbaud are not too expensive."

ACCESSORIES

"I first found this butterfly wings costume in one of the studios of ABS-CBN. I wore it to a Halloween party. I returned it and then found it again in the dressing room of Myx. It stayed there for almost a year. Nobody seemed to want it, so I took it home.

"Echo gave me a silver charm bracelet from Roxy. Isn't it cute? It has a matching silver necklace with a heart-shaped pendant.

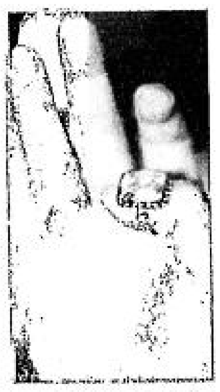
BIG watches are back in fashion.

A TIP from Heart: A good pair of shoes and a really nice bag can boost one's confidence.

"I only use most of the watches I have here for shows. The one that's really special to me is this silver analog watch from Mont Blanc. Big watches are in fashion again. I got this in Singapore. (Heart heaves a loud sigh.) It's a gift. Period.

"I really like jewelry. My favorite is a gold ring studded with diamonds. I got attracted to the flower design. Another favorite ring is made from a semi-precious stone. Its band is studded with diamonds. It reminds me of the ocean.

"To girls who are just beginning to buy jewelry, be careful with the diamonds that you pick. It's not the size that matters; it's the brilliance."



THIS RING reminds her of the ocean.

SLEEP WEAR

"I got this night dress from Woman's Secret. I actually wore this on a night out once. I was on a trip and ran out of clothes.

"Sometimes, I wear boxers and tank tops to bed. Sometimes, I wear big T-shirts, especially when I feel like I'm coming down with a cold or a fever."

SWIM WEAR

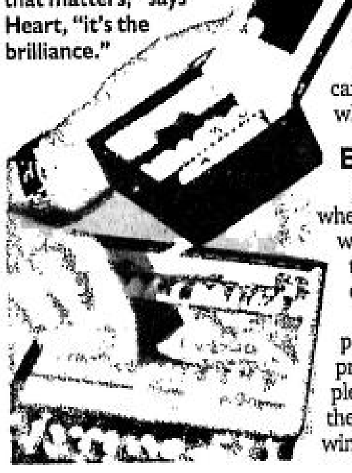
"My favorites are those I got from BCBG in the States. They're very flattering, especially to girls like me who don't have big boobs. They're very stylish, too. What I wear to the beach depends on what I plan to do there. If I just want to get a tan, I wear these strapless brassieres."

A SCENT a day ...

SCENTS

"I wear different scents everyday. I like Gucci Envy, L Occitane Green Tea, Miracle by Lancome, DKNY Be Delicious and Baby Doll by Yves Saint Lauren. But I've been using this brand, Gian Franco Ferre, for more than six years now. It's pretty strong, but the scent really really lasts. This is my signature scent.

"When I'm too immune and I can't smell myself anymore, that's when I change scents."



"IT'S NOT the size [of the diamond] that matters," says Heart, "it's the brilliance."

EYEWEAR

I like big shades. I use this one when I don't feel confident facing the world. It's perfect when you feel too tired to apply makeup or you've just cried. My favorite is this red Fendi.

Shades don't have to be very expensive. I'm just lucky that Fendi has provided most of what I have. A simple I2I is okay, too. The price is right, the shape is nice ... why not? (Heart winks. Echo is an endorser of I2I).

WHEN she's happy, Heart paints colorful pictures, like the self-portrait on her left.

STORMIE Omartian's "Just Enough Light for the Step I'm On" is perfect for "baby" Christians like herself.

HER black Prada pair—another gift from Echo—reminds her to "keep walking proudly."

Website: www.inq7money.net

BUSINESS

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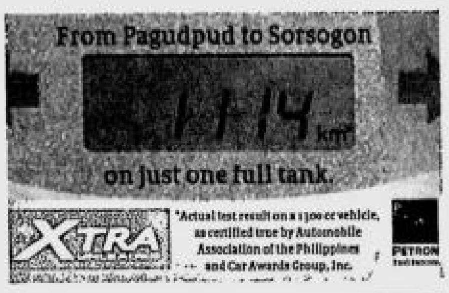

From Pagudpud to Sorsogon
1114 km
on just one full tank.

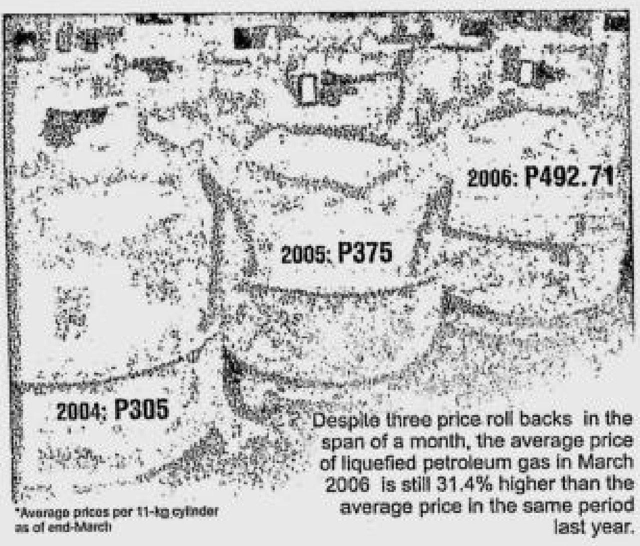
*Actual test result on a 1300 cc vehicle, as certified true by Automobile Association of the Philippines and Car Awards Group, Inc.

OFW remittances jump 14% to $1.8B

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

LPG prices still up in 2006



Despite three price roll backs in the span of a month, the average price of liquefied petroleum gas in March 2006 is still 31.4% higher than the average price in the same period last year.

*Average prices per 11-kg cylinder as of end-March

Source: Department of Energy
Kate Pedroso PDI Research

Despite slowdown in deployment of workers

By Doris C. Dumlao

REMITTANCES FROM OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS HIT $1.8 billion in the first two months, sustaining a double-digit growth rate of 14 percent from a year ago despite a slowdown in the the number of locals going abroad, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

For the month of February alone, the BSP said OFW remittances coursed through the banking system hit $866 million, or 11.6 percent better than the inflows in the same month last year.

The influx of more OFW money came despite a 10-percent contraction in the total number of land-based workers deployed abroad to 134,436 from a year ago, based on preliminary figures from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration for the first two months.

During the same period, the number of sea-based workers rose by 5.9 percent to 41,595.

"The increased deployment of highly skilled, thus higher-paid, land-based workers such as engineers, teachers, ship and pilot/aircraft officers, production-related workers and service providers more than compensated for the decline in the total number of deployed land-based workers," the BSP reported.

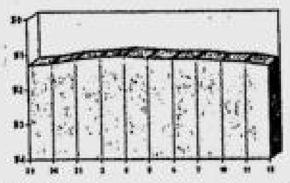
The higher level of remittances was also partly attributed by the BSP to commercial banks' expansion of banking services.

"Commercial banks ... heightened their marketing campaign by offering various telemoney products and services—such as phone-banking, Internet/online banking and bills payment services—specifically in Hong Kong, the United

OFW/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.33 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 12, 2006

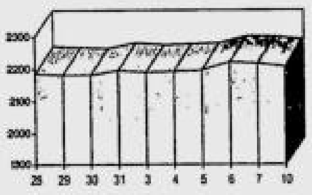
¥ 118.37 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 12, 2006

GOLD: $596.50-597.00

per ounce Hong Kong, April 12, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Mining lifts stocks

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.3-PERcent higher yesterday, on last-minute bargain hunting with investors squaring off positions on the eve of the long Easter weekend, dealers said.

Mining scrips took center stage because of rising metal prices, they added.

The composite index added 6.59 points to 2,223.97, the day's high, off a low of 2,215.01.

MINING/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

RP, China seen leading retail sales growth in Asia Pacific /B2

RP to retire $411M in Brady bonds /B6

DONATION FROM VIENNA

MRT 3 to get 48 Austrian trains

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF VIENNA, AUSTRIA, will donate its second-hand trains to the Philippines as part of the expansion program of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) system, according to a ranking transportation official.

Under the scheme, the Viennese local government will donate in several batches up to 48 light rail vehicles (LRVs), which will be used to boost the capacity of the MRT Line 3 that runs along Edsa.

"The first units will start arriving by December," Transportation Assistant Secretary Robert R. Castañares said in a recent press briefing. "The trains are still in use in Austria now."

A memorandum of understanding sealing the deal was signed between Transportation Undersecretary Guiling A. Mamondiong and Vienna Vice Mayor Sepp Rieder last April 4, 2006.

Castañares said the used LRVs would be used to increase MRT-3's capacity, which is already heavily taxed with the existing ridership level.

The MRT-3 system ferries close to half a million commuters a day along the length of

MRT 3/ B2

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Arrive.
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Sheer Driving Pleasure
BMW X5
BMW Golfsport

BMW XTour

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- Or the option of a BMW X5 or a BMW X3 fitted with high performance aerodynamic kits, loaded with a set of precision-based Mizuno golf clubs and an all-weather golf bag, at no added cost.

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San Miguel to consolidate South China beer operations

Cut costs, improve efficiencies

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP. IS CONSOLIDATING ITS operations in South China this year to reduce production costs, an INQUIRER source said.

In line with this, San Miguel will close one of its two breweries in Guangdong province—Guangzhou San Miguel Brewery Co. Ltd. and San Miguel (Guangdong) Brewery Ltd.

While the Guangzhou brewery incurred operating loss in 2005, the Guangdong brewery has been posting healthy volume and revenue growths as a result of San Miguel's efforts to improve the market position of the Dragon Beer brand, San Miguel told the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) recently.

San Miguel said Guangzhou San Miguel Brewery's operating loss in 2005 was due to the company's shift to lower priced brands, and the higher marketing costs incurred in building that brand and enhancing its competitiveness.

Sources said a one-time "impairment" charge of roughly $35 million would be booked as a result of the consolidation of the breweries in South China, which was expected to improve efficiencies in San Miguel's South China operations.

The food and beverage giant is restructuring its South China operations and will rationalize production capacities in the area. Efforts will also be focused on reinforcing its brand and strengthening sales and distribution networks.

"With the single exception of Guangzhou San Miguel Brewery, our beer operations in North and South China, including Hong Kong have done reasonably well.

In the meantime, San Miguel reported a 14-percent increase in its international beer sales in the first two months of the year on strong results posted by the China operations.

It said revenues from international beer operations were up 6 percent to $43.1 million on sales of 6.97 million cases as of end-February. Sales in northern China were up 37 percent, driven mainly by San Miguel's "Blue Star" brand.

Sales in Guangzhou, meanwhile, recovered in February through an "under-the-crown" promo and implementation of a new sales structure.

In Hong Kong, sales were up from last year although these were skewed toward economy brands and export segments.

Sales in Australia were the same as last year, as San Miguel had to deal with heavy competitor discounting and a recent excise tax hike.

With San Miguel subsidiary J. Boag & Son not joining the price wars, volume shortfall had been offset by better average selling prices.

Sales in Indonesia in two months fell 7 percent due to a drop in January volumes following a price hike in December to cover for a 130-percent increase in fuel costs.

Lepanto pays $3-M loan from Canadian firm

By Christine A. Gaylican

LISTED MINING FIRM LEPANTO CONSOLIDATED Mining Co. said it had paid its $3-million loan from Ivanhoe Mines Ltd.

This freed Lepanto from a binding agreement that gave Ivanhoe the priority right to acquire Lepanto's stakes in mining assets in the Philippines, according to company vice president and assistant corporate secretary Lourdes Javier.

In an interview, Javier said Lepanto would now have more room to negotiate with other investors for its mining interests in the country.

The loan from Ivanhoe Mines was payable in six months with a 3-percent interest per year. The Canadian firm's priority right was also good for six months, Lepanto said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange. The Canadian firm, however, did not express interest in any of Lepanto's mining assets during the period, sources said.

In the same disclosure to the exchange, Lepanto said it had earmarked some P653 million for capital expenditures this year. The amount was intended for mine development and purchase of mining equipment.

The capex program would allow the company to improve production and liquidity.

PSE's 2-month profit hits ₱41M

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE SAID ITS net income hit P40.99 million in the first two months of the year on an operating income of P45.6 million.

The PSE did not make available comparative figures but said the two-month profit was more than half of the three-month income posted last year of P72.2 million.

PSE president Francis Lim said he was upbeat on this year's market prospects given public offerings held early this year.

"I think we are off to a good start, especially with the P8.5-billion initial public offering of First Generation Corp. and the P10.4-billion additional listing of Universal Robina Corp.," Lim said.

The PSE also said it was looking forward to more IPOs this year such as the announced plan of online broker CitisecOnline.Com to hold a public offering by June this year.

CitisecOnline will raise P165 million from the planned IPO. It plans to offer 110 million shares at P1 to P1.50 per share.

CitisecOnline is expected to qualify for listing under the PSE's small and medium enterprises board.

To boost the bourse's performance this year, Lim said the PSE inked an agreement with the Board of Investments to hasten the listing of qualified BOI-registered firms, which are required to list at least 10 percent of their stocks within 10 years of their BOI registration. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Macondray Plastics income up 8.7%

DAVAO-BASED MACONDRAY PLASTICS SAID its 2005 net income grew 8.7 percent to P24.4 million largely due to an increase in sales volumes, a financial report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission showed.

Macondray of the Lorenzo family supplies products and services mainly to the banana-growing and export industry in Mindanao, particularly companies under the Lapanday Group. It also produces an average of 130 metric tons of blown film plastic products, mostly seed bags and export packaging bags.

Sales in 2005 grew 29 percent to P345 million last year from P267 million in 2004. Revenues generated from the cultivation of bananas accounted for 37.4 percent of total revenues last year.

Export sales contributed 29.2 percent of the total revenue or P100.9 million.

Revenues generated from agricultural exports rose 17.3 percent due to an 11-percent increase in volume and 5.6 -percent hike in average selling prices.

Revenues generated from the sale of plastic products for the banana industry grew 19.4 percent with an increase in average selling prices. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

OFW . . .

From page B1

States, Italy, and the UK as well as strengthened tie-ups with foreign money transfer agents and non-bank channels," the BSP said.

The major sources of remittances remained to be the United States, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Singapore.

The BSP said the government was pursuing programs that would strengthen workers' technical training and education to enhance job-skills matching.

There are about eight million OFWs or about 10 percent of the population, of which three million are permanent residents.

PROJECTED first semester growth of 12 percent may be slower than last year's 14.5 percent but it remains among the highest in the region. PDI PHOTO

RP, China seen leading retail sales growth in Asia Pacific

RETAIL SALES GROWTH ACROSS MOST ASIA Pacific markets is expected to weaken in the first half of 2006, according to the latest MasterIndex™ of Retail forecast released by MasterCard International.

Ten out of the 12 Asia-Pacific markets included in the report are predicted to see growth of retail sales slow down in the first half of 2006. Only Hong Kong and Japan are expected to show higher year-on-year growth of 4.2 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

China and the Philippines will take the lead with double-digit growth, both at 12 percent, in the first six months, followed by Malaysia (8.8 percent) and Singapore (7.5 percent). The less bullish markets and their respective sales growth projections include Thailand (4 percent), Indonesia (3.9 percent), New Zealand (3.6 percent), Taiwan (2.9 percent), Australia (2.5 percent) and Korea (2.3 percent).

The expected six-month sales growth of 12 percent in the Philippines was, however, slower than the year-ago level of 14.5 percent. Sales growth in China last year was 13.2 percent.

"The projected slowdown in retail sales growth in Asia is not surprising given the steadily rising interest rates, higher world price of oil and the continuing uncertainty due to the bird flu and persistent terrorism threats," said Yuwa Hedrick-Wong, economic adviser to MasterCard in Asia-Pacific.

"The interest rate cycle will likely peak by mid-2006 and we should see a stronger showing in retail sales by the end of this year," he added.

Conducted twice a year in June and December, the MasterIndex of Retail was launched in June 2003 by MasterCard as part of its knowledge leadership initiatives in Asia-Pacific. Combining 10 years of retail sales data, factoring in the secular trend of growth of the retail industry, and using the MasterIndex of Consumer Confidence as an independent variable, it provides six-month forecasts of retail sales growth in 12 markets: Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

It is among MasterCard's MasterIndex suite of research products. The others include:

- The flagship MasterIndex of Consumer Confidence, the region's most comprehensive and longest running consumer sentiment survey.
- The MasterIndex of Travel, which combines outbound travel forecasts for the region with a survey of Asian travelers' lifestyle trends.
- The MasterIndex of Women's Advancement, which compares the socioeconomic level of women to men.

MRT 3 to get . . .

From page B1

Edsa. Conditions onboard the trains are especially cramped during morning and evening rush hours.

Castañares said that while the Austrian trains would be handed over in good condition, the transportation department would take no chances and invest heavily in ensuring the safety of the second-hand units.

"We'll be spending about $500,000 to refurbish each car," he said. "The money will come from the DOTC's budget."

Assuming that the refurbishing costs will stay within budget, the government will spend a total of $24 million—about P1.2 billion at present exchange rates—to ensure the good running condition of the trains.

The DOTC official pointed out that refurbishing second-hand LRVs was still cheaper than buying new ones, which cost at least $2 million per car.

Refurbishing work on the LRVs will be done in the Philippines using MRT's own facilities.

Given that the train will be delivered in batches as they are retired from service in Vienna, Castañares estimated that it would take 12 months to complete the refurbishing of the entire 48-train fleet.

The new units will provide a significant boost to MRT-3's existing capacity. At present, the system has 72 Czech-made trains, of which 60 are normally operating in three-car configurations.

This means that passengers normally have to wait at least three minutes at stations in between trains. Castañares said the additional units would cut the time gap between trains to only two minutes.

"The travel time will not be cut significantly, but it will help ease the congestion problem," he said.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 12, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	2,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35	34.5	34.5	89,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	61	61	60.5	60.5	1,333,700
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19.75	19	19.75	3,100
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.5	0.54	0.5	0.54	15,500,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71	71	70	71	91,800
International Exch. Bank	32	32	32	32	5,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	39.5	39.5	38.5	39	1,632,000
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	51	51	51	51	500
Philippine National Bank	34	34.5	34	34.5	12,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	15	14.25	14.75	137,100
Security Bank Corp.	46.5	47.5	46.5	47.5	12,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	28	10,100
Manulife Financial Corp.	3230	3230	3230	3230	80
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	30,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	186	186	185	185	2,700
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2165	2165	2160	2160	590
Ivantage Corp.	1.12	1.2	1.12	1.18	12,482,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44	44.5	44	44.5	287,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	46	45	46	583,400
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14.25	14	14	12,100
Manila Electric Co. B	20.25	20.25	20	20	477,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	3,507,000
Petron Corp.	4.3	4.35	4.25	4.35	6,164,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	40,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.98	0.95	0.98	950,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.9	1.94	1.9	1.94	17,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	20,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19.5	20	19.5	20	251,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35.5	36	35.5	35.5	139,900
San Miguel Pure Foods A	56	56	56	56	100
RFM Corp.	0.75	0.76	0.75	0.76	170,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.75	669,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	270,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	60	59	60	292,900
San Miguel Corp. B	78.5	80.5	78	78.5	445,400
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	18.75	18.25	18.75	2,729,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	140,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.33	5,720,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.46	1.48	8,551,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	50,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.45	1,824,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3	3	3	3	8,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	7,300,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	5,600,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	410,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.008	25,000,000
Ayala Corp.	352.5	355	352.5	352.5	60,040
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	20,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.5	2,917,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	30,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	148,000
APC Group Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	4,130,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	182,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.92	0.9	0.9	1,230,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.97	0.9	0.96	40,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.98	4,880,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.55	3.6	1,487,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	90,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.9	1,915,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.26	1.26	305,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	33,000
Medco Holdings	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	1,050,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	500,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	350,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	9,000,000
SM Investments Corp.	224	224	223	224	5,340
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	850,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11	11.25	11	11.25	7,248,400
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	150,000
Belle Corp.	1.26	1.34	1.26	1.34	26,110,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.92	1.88	1.88	1,620,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.72	1.76	1.7	1.72	224,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	560,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	220,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.64	0.65	41,990,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	900,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.65	0.73	0.65	0.73	1,570,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.4	1.48	1.4	1.46	9,081,000
Interport Res.	0.0048	0.0055	0.0048	0.0055	49,000,000
Interport Res. B.	0.0048	0.0055	0.0048	0.0055	67,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	110,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	690,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	500,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.29	16,770,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	770,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	14,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.29	0.33	0.29	0.33	11,610,000
SM Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	634,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	2,183,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.125	0.125	6,410,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	2.5	12.75	12.5	12.5	28,800
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.97	2,270,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	890	905	890	900	14,850
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.95	3	2.9	3	2,688,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1980	1985	1975	1980	82,690
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	2,850,000
Ionics Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.3	1.3	133,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.046	0.045	0.046	3,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.049	0.05	7,700,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.12	180,000
Philweb Corp.	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.025	83,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICE					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.42	2.44	230,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.6	1.64	1.6	1.64	320,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	1,086,700
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	50,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,757,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.78	604,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	117,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	10,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	2,000
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	16,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.88	1.9	1.8	1.84	290,000
Paxys Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	225,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	4,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.98	2.08	1.98	2.06	9,731,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	2	2.1	2	2.1	5,184,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	746,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.4	7.8	7.4	7.8	4,142,000
Benguet Corp. A	10	12.25	10	11.75	1,240,000
Benguet Corp. B	35	38	35	38	12,800
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.06	2.06	1.98	1.98	478,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.35	115,310,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	54,860,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.026	0.022	0.026	1,561,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.031	0.032	0.031	0.032	512,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.008	0.007	0.0075	1,444,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.75	3.95	3.75	3.8	8,694,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.85	3.95	3.75	3.85	10,195,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28	28	28	182,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.41	1,560,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.4	0.43	0.4	0.42	5,900,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.26	6,570,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.009	151,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.01	56,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.57	0.62	0.57	0.62	610,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.58	0.62	0.58	0.62	260,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.85	3.95	3.85	3.95	346,000
PREFERRED					
ATS CORP. - Preferred	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	28,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13	13	12.75	13	198,300

CURRENCIES

April 12, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.822842	1.000000	51.2200
Japan	Yen	0.006963	0.008462	0.4334
United Kingdom	Pound	1.439233	1.749100	89.5889
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106050	0.128883	6.6014
Switzerland	Franc	0.634468	0.771069	39.4942
Canada	Dollar	0.719456	0.874355	44.7845
Singapore	Dollar	0.510384	0.620270	31.7702
Australia	Dollar	0.602815	0.732601	37.5238
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.183068	2.653083	135.8909
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.219401	0.266638	13.6572
Brunei	Dollar	0.508807	0.618353	31.6720
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000111	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.021648	0.026309	1.3475
UAE	Dirham	0.224037	0.272272	13.9458
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.215300	62.2477
Argentina	Peso	0.267373	0.324939	16.6434
Brazil	Real	0.384146	0.466853	23.9122
Denmark	Kroner	0.134039	0.162898	8.3436
India	Rupee	0.018416	0.022381	1.1464
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.224330	0.272628	13.9640
Mexico	New Peso	0.074452	0.090481	4.6344
New Zealand	Dollar	0.501763	0.609793	31.2336
South Africa	Rand	0.134526	0.163492	8.3741
Korea	Won	0.000862	0.001048	0.0537
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025372	0.030834	1.5793

Mining lifts stocks

From page B1

The broader all-shares index ended down a marginal 0.07 point to 1,101.11.

Gainers outnumbered losers 61 to 33, while 49 stocks ended unchanged. Volume was 5.38 billion shares worth P1.2 billion.

Financial markets will be closed today and Friday for public holidays and will reopen on Monday.

"We will likely see more activities after the break as investors accumulate shares ahead of first-quarter earnings results," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings. *AFP*

Gold breaks through $600 mark

NEW YORK—GOLD BULLION nudged through the $600 per ounce barrier for the first time in a quarter century on Tuesday, prompting investors to ask: Can $800, or even $1,000 gold, be far behind?

Most analysts agreed that once the precious metal broke the psychological mark, it would likely keep going. But they were divided over whether gold mining company stocks would be as attractive as owning bullion.

They noted that the big gold miners, like Newmont Mining and Barrick Gold, have failed to see their share prices keep pace with the steady rise in gold.

Instead, investors are flocking to smaller, so-called "junior" gold companies that are involved in exploration.

"Gold will go dramatically higher, it's still early," said Peter Schiff, chief executive of Euro Pacific Capital, a brokerage based in Newport Beach, California. "Will it reach $800? Yes, $1,000? Yes. $2,000? Yes. It has nowhere to go but up, but it depends on how far the dollar and other currencies will be devalued."

"The momentum for the commodity is going up and if spot prices break the $600 mark, they will probably continue to go up," said Victor Flores, an analyst with HSBC Securities.

Peter Spina, who operates an investor web site, goldseek.com, said in the short-term there was likely to be correction as the market was a little over-extended, with physical demand from India, the world's top consumer of gold, mostly for jewelry, "drying up at these prices."

On world markets on Tuesday, gold bullion rose as high as $604—a level not seen since December 1980, when Jimmy Carter was president—before easing in New York.

Schiff said he was not surprised.

"It's about time," said Schiff. I have been buying gold for six years and have no intention of slowing down now. I don't think the explosion (in price) really reflects what is happening with paper currencies. Currencies are losing value and will continue to do so at a rapid pace."

"There is a lot of speculative fever returning to the sector," Spina said, adding that traffic on goldseek.com was up some 250 percent in the last year. *Reuters*

US, China reach deals meant to narrow trade gap

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States has won a string of commitments from China aimed at narrowing a record trade gap, but US industry groups said the real test could come next week in talks between Chinese President Hu Jintao and President George W. Bush over China's currency system.

Ahead of the discussions on April 20, top economic officials from both countries struck a series of deals on Tuesday in which China pledged to lift its ban on American beef, to crack down on the sale of pirated computer software and to begin negotiations on allowing foreign firms to compete for Chinese government contracts.

American industry groups were generally pleased with the results of an annual meeting of the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, which was created in 1983 to resolve trade frictions between the two nations.

Frank Vargo, vice president for international trade at the National Association of Manufacturers, called the deals announced Tuesday "incremental contributions to the removal of trade obstacles."

But Vargo said he was hopeful that they will set the stage for a significant breakthrough during the Bush-Hu summit next week on the issue of currency.

American manufacturers contend that China is depressing the value of its currency by as much as 40 percent to make Chinese goods cheaper for US consumers and American products more expensive in China.

While China has allowed the value of the yuan to rise by a little over 3 percent in the past year, US companies contend the Chinese are going far too slowly in dealing with what could make a big difference in narrowing the trade gap.

Bush, citing America's $202 billion (euro166.87 billion) deficit with China, said Monday he was hopeful that Hu would address the currency issue during his visit.

The talks on Tuesday were led by Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez and US Trade Representative Rob Portman, both of whom praised the Chinese for the commitments they did make.

"In our discussions today, which were very frank and positive, we were able to solve some problems," Portman said at a joint closing news conference.

Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi, who led the Chinese delegation, said her country has been "earnestly implementing" the directions of China's top leaders to boost imports from the United States.

Wu said that she was traveling with a delegation of more than 200 Chinese business executives with the expectation that they will sign 107 contracts to buy $16.2 billion worth of US products during stops in a number of states. *AP*

Mobil
sh or Credit
9/10
Special
307 9/10
Super+
317 9/10

ALL PUMPED UP
An attendant changes the sign at a Mobil station he works at in Washington. Pump prices for gasoline are rising with the temperature, and likely will average about 25 cents a gallon more than last summer, the US government estimates. AP

Oil concerns push down Asia shares

SINGAPORE—OIL YESTERDAY nudged above $69 a barrel on worries over a nuclear standoff with Iran, which pushed most Asian share markets lower.

The dollar weakened against the yen ahead of US trade data.

In Asian stock markets, technology companies and exporters, such as Toyota Motor Corp., fell on concerns the US Federal Reserve would continue to lift interest rates in the world's largest economy as costs rise from soaring oil prices.

Higher rates curb consumption and add to borrowing cost.

Financial bookmakers predict the FTSE 100 will edge up 7-10 points in early trade from its finish at 6,016.5 on Tuesday.

Masatoshi Sato, a senior strategist at Mizuho Investors Securities, said an unexpected rise in tensions over Iran's nuclear program, which have helped send oil prices above $69 a barrel, cast a shadow over the US stock market and, as a result, prompted profit-taking on Japanese shares.

"The Tokyo market has gone too far too fast and looked a little bit overstretched," Sato said.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei average fell for a third straight session, ending 1.47 percent lower at 17,162.55. The broader Topix index eased 1.54 percent to 1,742.89.

The MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian shares was down 0.67 percent by 0600 GMT.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng was trading 0.9 percent lower and Australian stocks ended nearly 1 percent down.

South Korea's main index finished 0.18 percent lower.

But Taiwan shares climbed 0.76 percent, reversing earlier losses as technology shares such as Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., the world's largest contract chip maker, rose more than 1 percent.

The dollar eased, slipping further from a one-month high against the yen as dealers grew cautious about buying the US currency ahead of trade deficit data due later in the session.

Iran's announcement that it had joined the group of countries possessing nuclear technology also weighed on the dollar.

By 0600 GMT, the dollar was buying 118.20 yen, down slightly from around 118.30 yen in late US trade on Tuesday and sticking to the 115.50-119.50 yen range it has been trapped in since end-January. The euro was unchanged around $1.2145 .

Crude oil rose 7 cents to $69.05 by 0610 GMT after rising to a seven-month high the day before on rising tensions over Iran's nuclear program and supply disruptions in Nigeria. *Reuters*

Chinese think tank warns of deflation

SHANGHAI—CHINA FACES THE specter of deflation within the next two years if overcapacity continues to swamp domestic demand, a government economist warned.

Raw materials and power prices are rising but downstream demand is insufficient to satisfy the excess supply from the industrial sector, said Zhang Hanya of the Academy of Macroeconomic Research at the National Development and Reform Commission, the nation's top economic planning body.

"If the contradiction between the rising prices of raw materials caused by upstream monopolies and the inability to raise downstream prices due to competition is not resolved, CPI will continue to fall," Zhang said in a report published in the China Securities Journal on Wednesday. "Drops like this will lead to deflation within one or two years."

The NDRC has repeatedly warned over the last year of overcapacity in about a dozen sectors, including property, cement, steel, autos, and metal smelters.

Rapid expansions have raised the prices of commodities worldwide, while increasing the toll of pollution in China, and the struggle to sell the resulting output has caused trade disputes, erased profit margins and carries the risk of defaulted loans, bankruptcies and unemployment.

Annual consumer inflation in China was 0.9 percent in February and 1.9 percent in January. *Reuters*

Top economies urged to let currencies strengthen

GREENSPAN

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—FORMER US central bank chief Alan Greenspan yesterday said that global economic imbalances might improve if some high-growth economies would allow their currencies to strengthen.

"World equilibrium is probably better reached by allowing a number of these countries, which are showing extraordinary economic growth, and really, in many cases, twice the growth of the developed nations, and allow currencies to firm," the former US Federal Reserve chairman said in an address to a conference in Seoul sponsored by the Financial Times newspaper.

Greenspan spoke via satellite from the United States. He didn't specify the economies by name, but was responding to a question about the accumulation of vast amounts of foreign reserves by Asian countries including China, Japan and South Korea.

"I realize what that does to competitiveness, but that's the way markets work efficiently," Greenspan said. "In other words, to prevent the exchange rates from moving creates all sorts of distortions."

Greenspan, who led the Federal Reserve from 1987 until his retirement early this year, presided over an era of low inflation, low unemployment and the longest economic expansion in US history—a decade of uninterrupted growth from March 1991 to March 2001.

Greenspan, however, said he doubted the economies of Asia could formally agree on ways to work together to allow their currencies to strengthen in tandem.

"My judgment would be it's very difficult to get an agreement between a number of major countries who have their own domestic political adjustments to make and find that there is a single adjustment on which all could agree," he said.

Persistent worries over growing US budget and current account deficits have led some in Washington to call for US trade partners, including China, to allow their currencies to strengthen against the dollar.

That could cause their products to become more expensive in the United States while making US goods cheaper in their markets, thus helping to even out the trade balance.

China, the world's fastest growing major economy has racked up growth rates of more than 9 percent for years and expanded 9.9 percent last year.

Last year's budget deficit came to $319 billion (euro262 billion) an improvement from 2004 but still the third largest deficit ever recorded. *AP*

Policy shift seen good for Japan, bad for the world

TOKYO—IMAGINE A BANK that doles out loans but charges no interest. For five years, that's what Japan has been for the world economy—an all-purpose lender with next-to-nothing borrowing costs thanks to the central bank's zero interest rate policy.

The trend helped pump up economies, stocks and foreign currencies from America to Australia. But concerns are mounting it could all unravel on a global scale with the Bank of Japan's decision last month to finally tighten the taps on all the easy money.

At risk is a flow of funds known as the carry trade, an investment strategy that has lured people to Japan to borrow money on the cheap and invest it overseas for higher returns.

No one is sure how much money is at stake, but economists say stopping the flow could prompt global investors to sell their holdings of stocks, bonds and other assets outside Japan, particularly in the United States.

That could weaken the dollar, push up yields on US Treasury bonds and boost interest rates in the United States and Europe.

The carry trade is driven by the gap between near-zero percent interest rates in Japan and higher rates elsewhere in the world.

In an attempt to bail the world's second-largest economy out of more than a decade of doldrums, the BOJ implemented a super loose monetary policy five years ago to make it easy for companies to borrow funds.

Not only did the central bank hold interest rates close to zero percent, it flooded commercial banks with about 35 trillion yen (US$295 billion; euro244 billion) in daily liquidity, nearly six times the amount banks actually needed, by many economists' estimates.

On March 9, however, the BOJ declared Japan's economy is back on track and soon ready for higher interest rates—a trend that will squeeze the profit margin, or spread, on carry trades, making them riskier and less attractive.

It's hard to know to what degree—and where—investors will move their money, but many experts believe that US markets could suffer as a result.

"What everyone is worried about is the whole regime will disappear," said David Bloom, a currency analyst at HSBC in London. "At some point this whole carry trade situation will end. The point is whether this is the catalyst."

In a sign that investors are already reacting to the shift, the yield on Japan's 10-year government bond has climbed to around 1.9 percent from 1.6 percent since the BOJ's announcement last month.

Big change may still be some time down the road, however, because the gap between Japanese and US rates is still big and likely to remain that way. Most expect the BOJ to wait until summer or later to raise rates, and then only bump them to 0.25 percent.

BOJ Gov. Toshihiko Fukui has pledged to make Japan's transition gradual so as not to rattle markets. But analysts say clear communication from the BOJ about the next step will be crucial. *AP*

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Urvan force felt in Cabanatuan

A MASSIVE CONVOY OF 65 NISsan Urvan service shuttles paraded the streets of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija last March 14, kick-starting the launch of Nissan's Ur Van, Ur Business held at Royce Motors Sentra Inc (RMSI).

Ur Van, Ur Business is a program conceived by Universal Motors Corp (UMC) to promote Filipino self-sufficiency by encouraging enterprising Pinoys to go into business using the Nissan Urvan.

"The Urvan is not only for family use, it's for business as well," said RMSI president Vicky Gaetos in her speech, explaining the merits of owning an Urvan. "This is a good way to supplement your income," she added.

Briefly after Gaetos's speech, UMC SVP for marketing, Elizabeth Lee further discussed Ur Van, Ur Business. She said that for the country to succeed and grow, it needs patriots - especially during these trying times. Ur Van, Ur Business is UMC's response to this need. She said that the program calls on to that little voice inside all of us that says "we can do this." She also said that there is still hope, that in being an entrepreneur, you become a patriot who helps the country's economy and your fellow Filipinos, especially the downtrodden.

Also present during the launch was Nueva Ecija provincial governor Tomas Joson III who talked about the government's thrust on road safety by educating drivers on proper road etiquette. His speech was soon followed by a ceremonial turn-over of 5 Nissan Urvan ambulances to the Nueva Ecija Provincial Government.

UMC's Nissan Urvan is a very versatile business partner. It comes in 12, 15, and 18 seater designs and features very spacious leg space plus a dual air-conditioning system, thus giving maximum comfort for all passengers. And with its reclining seats and adjustable headrests, passengers need not worry about posture and back problems. Its 2.7 liter diesel engine provides that extra boost for cruising and acceleration.

Get a Nissan Urvan now and become a driving force for the country. Just visit a Nissan dealer near you.

Summer adventures at Tumble Tots

UK-BASED INTERNATIONAL PRE-school Tumble Tots Philippines is offering a summer enrichment fun courses for children 1.5 to five years old.

The "Tumble Tots Summer Adventure" will run from April 17 to May 12 and is designed to enhance the social skills of children and develop their positive personality traits.

The courses are Look What I Can Do! for kids 1.5 to 2.5 years old, All About Me for 2.5 to 3.5 years old, and What a Wonderful World! for 3.6 to five years old.

Look What I Can Do will develop a child's independence through fun and exciting activities that are meaningful to him. The child will learn to explore what he can do with his body, practice self-help skills, and make new friends while engaging in storytelling, painting, food experience, active play and other outdoor activities.

All About Me will teach a child to express his individuality while learning how to work with other children, handle differences and participate in group activities. Storytelling, literature, crafts, active play and other outdoor activities will help him develop his cognitive and language skills, creativity and self-confidence.

What a Wonderful World! is a literature-based program designed around renowned children's story books, with different areas of learning extended from the story. This will lead a child to a journey of discovery and exploration through stimulating and engaging activities that include storytelling, cooking, arts and crafts, movement, and active play, among others.

Tumble Tots is located at the ground floor of Technoplaza I at Eastwood City Cyberpark in Libis, Quezon City (tel. nos. 687-6793, 687-6375, 0917-7010097) and along Mabini St., Davao City (tel. no. 082-2251847).

Dyan Joyce Bian- Cortez, managing director of Tumble Tots, says they are also offering the Children's Musical Theater in partnership with the Trumpets Playshop for children 4-12 years old.

"Tumble Tots focuses on the intellectual and motor skills development of children between six months and six years old. Our program is designed to develop a child's positive personality traits of self confidence, self esteem, self-discipline and independence, thus enhancing their personal and social skills and their success in life later," Cortez explained.

"The teachers nurture and motivate my child to explore and do things by himself. He has already developed the "I Can" attitude. By constantly praising my child for a "good job", it has boost my child's confidence and self esteem. From a shy child, Lance is now a bubbly, happy child," says Mommy Henie.

"When we finally showed up for Naomi's first day, my wife and I were asked to take part in our baby's activities. These entailed a lot of singing, active play (walking on planks, crawling in tunnels, etc.) and, of course, reading books. Apparently, over the weeks she has been regularly attending her sessions, I can see great changes in my child's attitude and dispositions. Her self-confidence was heightened tenfold!," says daddy Norman Petel of his one year old daughter at Tumble Tots.

To Shawie Fajardo, Tumble Tots has improved the listening skills and imagination of her two-year-old son, Joaqui, who now wants to read books and have his parents read them aloud to him.

These are just some of the comments of happy parents whose children are enrolled with Tumble Tots, according to Dyan.

"A child learns best through play, which is the language of childhood. This helps him/her develop concepts, understand how things and ideas are connected and develop basic skills in reading, writing and communication," Dyan says of the Tumble Tots philosophy.

SOMERSET REACHES OUT TO LEYTE LANDSLIDE VICTIMS

Ascott once again demonstrates the Heartware philosophy of service from the heart and going the extra mile when Somerset Serviced Residences, Philippines goes beyond the walls of their three properties in Makati in their latest effort. After a heavy downpour disintegrating a mountainside in Southern Leyte, a landslide burying numerous households and an elementary school in the eastern region of the Philippines ensued. This natural calamity has taken the lives of hundreds and left many homeless and in need of basic provisions. Somerset Millennium, Somerset Olympia and Somerset Salcedo Makati thus initiated a three-week donation drive to help the unfortunate. Launched in Feb. 23, the Somerset staff initiated the Leyte Landslide Donation Drive and lent a helping hand to the victims of the tragedy. Cash donations, and other necessities such as canned goods, blankets, old clothes and toiletries donated generously were presented to the Philippines National Red Cross, who coordinated the relief efforts for the landslide victims.

KIPLING OPENS AT SM MEGAMALL

Kipling, one of the best woman's casual bag brand in the world has recently held a grand opening and blessing of its new store at SM Megamall. Kipling's exclusive Philippine distributor, Greyhound Marketing Corp, headed by Ko Hu and Benjamin L. Go; Fr. Marnecio Cuartero and Kipling representative from Belgium, Olivia Mouille led the ribbon cutting ceremony. Kipling offers a wide variety of trendy, unique and fashionable bag designed for women living in harmony with today's world. Visit and see more of Kipling fashion at SM Megamall Mega A Building and watch out for Kipling grand opening at SM Mall of Asia on May 2006.

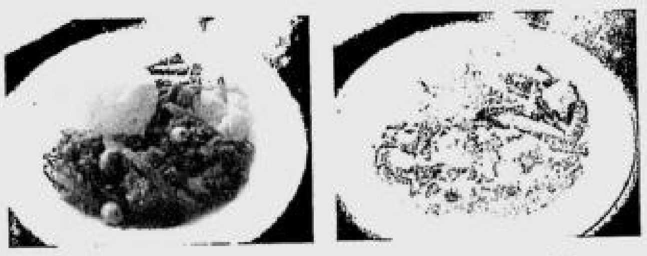
1ST PHILIPPINE MT. EVEREST EXPEDITION SUPPORTED BY MOZCOM

Mozcom recently signed up with the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE) to be its official ISP and one of its main supporters in its valiant quest to conquer Mt. Everest. The team aims to bring glory to the country and lift the spirits of the Filipinos by showing that all things are possible through teamwork and unity. As the official ISP, Mozcom will develop, maintain and market the official website of the team. It will also assist in raising sponsorship funds by selling souvenir shirts and accepting donations through the award-winning PayEasy Online Payment System. While the entire team is expected to climb Mt. Everest in 2007, a reconnaissance party will climb by April of 2006. A two-man team is expected to reach the summit by May 2006. The advance party has been acclimatizing in Nepal since February to give them enough experience in helping lead the whole team in the Unity Climb in 2007. Special Edition Mozcom Nitro-Team Everest prepaid Internet cards will be sold online at the website. Part of the proceeds will be donated to FPMEE. To keep track of the latest news on the team, visit www.philippine-everest.com. Shown in photo are (from left) Mozcom marketing executive Jill Legaspi, FPMEE team leader and former DOST Usec. Art Valdez sealing the partnership with Mozcom COO/CTO Robertson Chiang and MFPI president Reggie Pablo, Team FPMEE.

ProductFILES

Holy Week specials at Café Adriatico

LJC RESTAURANT GROUP'S CAFÉ ADRIATICO (MALATE, GATEWAY, EASTwood and Westgate) has prepared Holy Week specials for those who are not going out to the beach to enjoy the tranquil city atmosphere this week: Bacalao Española - a Holy Week staple, salted codfish slowly simmered in tomatoes with white wine and olives; and Scampi Palermo in Café Adriatico - baby prawns flambéed with Italian liqueur, to a juicy pink perfection.



Easter Sunday treats for kids at Chili's

CALLING ALL THE YOUNG AND THE YOUNG AT heart. Chili's is inviting you all to a fun-filled Easter Sunday celebration on April 16. Be prepared to be served with a good time. Chili's Grill and Bar Restaurant has prepared a fun filled day for kids. To start the ball rolling, Chili's will have an Easter Egg hunt that will certainly keep these young fellows busy exploring the restaurant for hidden eggs. Up for gabs are stuffed bunnies and Easter eggs with either candies or smoothies inside. The offer, however, is only good while supplies last so come in early. Chili's serves fun, fresh and flavorful items that keep guests coming back for more. Their signature items like the famous double-basted Baby Back Ribs, sizzling fajitas, Big Mouth Burgers, grilled steaks, Boneless Buffalo Wings, and Southwestern Eggrolls are constant favorites. That's because Chili's always puts an interesting twist on the familiar. At Chili's, good food and a good time are served all the time. All of Chili's branches will be open on Maundy Thursday and Black Saturday to serve your dining needs.

Take home a live Easter Bunny, courtesy of Teriyaki Boy

KIDS AND TWEENS WILL HAVE SOMETHING MORE TO LOOK FORWARD to come Easter Sunday - live Easter bunnies to cuddle and take home at participating Teriyaki Boy Outlets. As has been their tradition since 2003, the restaurant chain known for bringing Japan to your dining experience, is again offering children aged 3 to 12 years, a chance to win a real live bunny when they dine in participating Teriyaki Boy outlets on Easter Sunday, April 16. Children will automatically be asked to draw from a basket of toy Easter eggs containing prizes that include Meiji chocolates, stuffed toy rabbits, as well as the real breathing animal. Live Easter bunnies will be given away on Sunday, April 16, at all Teriyaki Boy outlets except at the Promenade-Greenhills Shopping Center and Gateway Mall in Cubao, Quezon City. There are 12 conveniently-located Teriyaki Boy outlets throughout Metro Manila and one in Baguio. Their new branches at the Paseo Center in Makati and Harbor View in Manila open on Wednesday, April 19.

Fraud-proof your business

YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT, BUT CHANCES are, there is some form of fraud happening in your business. It could be theft of company assets, misappropriations of resources, financial statement and accounting fraud, public corruption, taking kickbacks or bribes, or just some kind of scam. Fraud comes in many forms and is a widespread problem that affects practically every organization, regardless of size, location, or industry.

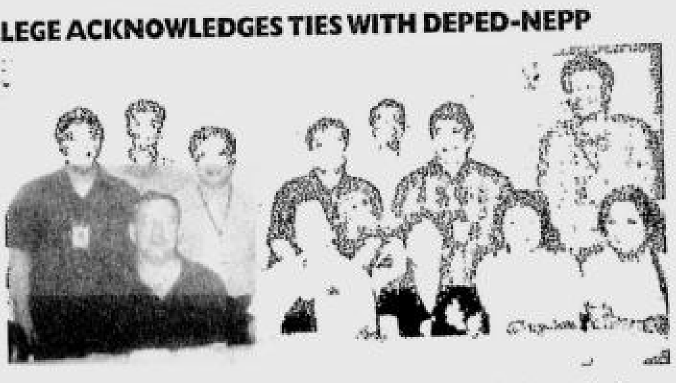
Fraud steals a company's competitive edge. It increases the cost of goods and services which can lead to bankruptcy. The cliché, "An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure" makes good business sense. But when prevention is not enough, a business organization must take more active steps, such as learning how to detect fraud.

In a pioneering program to help businesses both big and small, the Center for Global Best Practices (tel. nos. 842-7148 or 59), in collaboration with Punongbayan & Araullo (P & A), is holding a seminar entitled, "Preventing and Detecting Business Fraud and Theft" scheduled on May 11 and 12, at the Peninsula Hotel, Makati City. The 2-day seminar will expose participants to the many cases and forms of fraud. The event will cover the essentials in identifying fraud and knowing how to prevent it from happening to your business.

This first and only seminar for the year will cover finance, legal, investigative and other aspects to fraud-proof your business. The panel of speakers is composed of experts in the field of preventing and detecting fraud, namely, lawyer Elfren Meneses, Jr., chief of the anti-fraud division of the National Bureau of Investigation, Lilian S. Linsangan, head of P & A's audit division, as well as forensic accounting experts led by Juan Carlos Robles, P & A audit partner; lawyer Charlie Yalung, partner at Picazolaw, and Capt. Conrado Dumlao, president of Truth Verifier Systems which is regarded as the best detective agency in the Philippines. The seminar is a CPE-accredited program.

Learn the modus operandi of fraudsters and say "No" to being a victim.

ASIA PACIFIC COLLEGE ACKNOWLEDGES TIES WITH DEPED-NEPP



Asia Pacific College (APC) recently acknowledged its ties with the Department of Education National English Proficiency Program (DepEd-NEPP) in line with APC's Industry-Academe Cooperative Education (I-ACE) approach through a Government-Industry-Academe (GIA) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Research and Development program. The Intranet-Internet and mobile-based applications are sets of Integrated ICT modules that register, monitor and collate reports of NEPP teacher-mentors, which DepED aims to use to track down their national intervention program in improving teaching competencies of the Elementary and Secondary public school teachers using the English language. All these systems are conceptualized, designed, and developed by APC's Computer Science and Information Technology (CSIT) college students under its innovative Project-Based Learning mode. Shown in photo are officials and staff of DepED NEPP and APC, namely (seated from left): Nicolas Hadden, English Consultant from the US Embassy, NEPP co-directors Dr. Pearl Intia and Alice Panares, DepED staff Daisy Atienza and Alma Apamay; (standing from left): CSIT director Dennis Reyes, DepEd Rudy Yaba, APC ITRG Director Jojo Castillo, APC Natser officer Nel Lamera, DepED NEPP Denis Castro, APC MIM-EP JV Sayo, and APC Faculty Toti Casino.

THE MCS GOLDEN JUBILIARIANS

High School Class 1956 of the Malate Catholic School recently celebrated their Golden Jubilee simultaneous with the school's Grand Alumni Homecoming. Shown in photo are (seated from left): Remedios Ortiz Bicomong, Clarita Cartago Santiago, Lourdes Dimaano Luciano, Candida Lagrio, Fernando Mejia, Norma Salanga Mejia, Rebecca Hawkins and Ramona Eribal de Ocampo; (standing from left): Divina Abad Santos, Alberto Robles, Rufino Fontella, Meynardo Talo, Armando Noval, Cesar Ochoa, Venancio Camañag, Ernesto Abella, Jose Ignacio, Rosito Coloma Buenconsejo, Rosalinda Pangilinan Roque and Herminia Soriano Thacker.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die..."
John 11:25-26

Luzviminda Delgado Puno

Retired Supreme Court Clerk of Court
and Secretary of the Judicial and Bar Council

Has completed a victorious life and returned to her Creator on the 12th day of April, 2006 at the age of 65.

She is survived by her beloved husband,
Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Reynato S. Puno,
their children,
Reynato, Jr. and Cheryl Mae, Emmanuel and Rachelle Catherine,
and Ruth,
and grandchildren,
Alessandra Isabelle, Laticia Raquelle and Elijah Rey.

Her remains lie in state at Chapels 7 to 9 at the Mortuary and Crematory of The Heritage Park, Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Interment will be at The Heritage Park on Easter Sunday,
the 16th of April, 2006, high noon
after the 10:00 am necrological service at the Mortuary and Crematory.

BUSINESS

RP to retire $411M in Brady bonds

Sending positive signal to investors

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT HAS firmed up plans to retire up to $411 million or 53 percent of its remaining Brady bonds by June, a high-ranking government source said.

The prepayment of these Bradys through call options allows the Philippines to ride on the sharp peso appreciation to replicate the external debt management strategy pursued by Latin American countries that had bounced back from fiscal woes like Brazil, Mexico and Colombia.

Following the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' recent approval to retire part of $774 million in outstanding Brady bonds—a bitter reminder of the country's debt crisis years—the source said an offer had been made for bondholders to sell back these debt paper to the government.

The call option gave the Philippine government the right (but not the obligation) to buy back the bonds within a specific period. The next window to call on the remaining Bradys, the source said, would be by 2008.

"This prepayment will reduce foreign debts and send a positive signal to investors," the source said.

At the same time, the source said the government would be able to replace the Brady bonds with cheaper funding alternatives. In this case, the government has decided to refinance the Brady bonds with proceeds from domestic borrowings.

The Brady bonds have become more expensive compared to newer global bond floats as interest rate spreads tightened over the years following improvements in the government's fiscal position.

Assuming that all investors holding the $411 million Bradys for which the Philippines issued a call would agree to liquidate their holdings, the source estimated that about $300 million worth of collateral consisting of zero-coupon US treasury notes would be freed up.

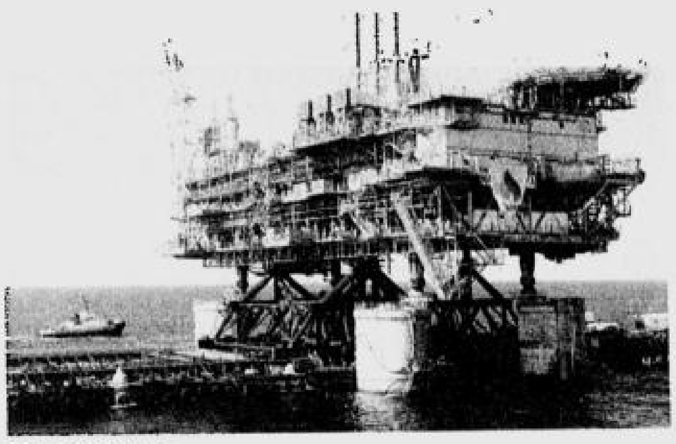
The release of the underlying collateral, which will revert to the BSP's gross international reserves, will minimize the foreign exchange outflows from the buyback transaction. To prepay the Bradys, the government will purchase dollars from the BSP using proceeds from domestic borrowings.

The government had wanted to retire the $774 million in remaining Bradys in full but the BSP approved only the buyback of half of the bonds to prevent a huge dent on its GIR.

The Philippines issued a total of $4.25 billion worth of Brady bonds between 1990 and 1992 in a debt restructuring program but some had been retired in previous bond exchange programs. Its remaining Brady bonds will mature as far as 2018 but there are shorter tenors due within the next three years.

The Brady bonds were named after Nicholas Brady, the Treasury chief of the United States during the term of President Ronald Reagan who proposed the issuance of these bonds to help heavily indebted countries like the Philippines restructure their commercial bank debt starting in the 1980s.

Some Latin American countries had used the same Brady bond buyback strategy following strong fiscal improvements. Mexico had retired $6.6 billion; Brazil, $6.8 billion, and Colombia, $600 million of these Brady bonds in recent years.



MALAMPAYA rig

Gov't bucks diversion of Malampaya income

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE has opposed a proposal from Congress to allocate revenues being collected by the national government from the Malampaya natural gas project for the modernization of the country's Armed Forces.

The DOF said the legislative proposal would distort the government's expenditure program, under which the national government's share of income from Malampaya has already been allocated for energy resource development projects of the Department of Energy.

House Bill No. 4336, authored by Rep. Danilo Suarez, will require the national government to place its share of income from Malampaya to the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The national government has a 6.36-percent share of the gross income from Malampaya. The rest is divided among private-sector contractors, the local government of Palawan and operating costs.

The bill will likewise require the national government to earmark all taxes and fees it collects from Malampaya contractors—such as branch profit tax, corporate income tax and royalties—for the modernization of the AFP.

The DOF said the diversion of tax and royalty fee collection to the AFP would mean revenue loss of between P1.2 billion and P3.71 billion, which is currently directed to the national government's general funds for various expenditure programs.

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DepED

PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 507-508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph e-mail deped_procurement@yahoo.com.ph
Direct Line 636-65-43 / Telefax 636-65-42, 633-93-43 Trunk Line 632-13-61 Locals 2085/2115

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepED-Bids and Awards Committee (DepED-BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for Supply and Delivery of the following:

Package	Item	Items	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Submission deadline/ Opening of Bids	Venue	End user
A	1	Albendazole Tablets (1,000,000 Tablets)	Php5,900,000.00	April 21, 2006 3:00 p.m.	May 04, 2006 3:00 p.m.	Bulwagan ng Karunungan DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City	Health and Nutrition Center (HNC)
B	1	Aneroid Sphygmomanometer (500 pieces)	Php1,330,000.00				
	2	Mercurial Sphygmomanometer (150 pieces)					
	3	Stethoscopes (650 pieces)					
		TOTAL	Php7,230,000.00				

Bids received that exceed the ABC per package shall be rejected.

The Bidding Documents shall be available in compact disk or hard copy at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting on April 6, 2006 upon payment of the non-refundable fee of PhP 2,000.00 in cash to the DepED Cashier.

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org or call DepED-PS at telephone no. 636-65-43 or fax no. 636-65-42

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties

(Sgd.) ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson, BAC

(PDI—April 6 & 13, 2006)

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PROCUREMENT SERVICE
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Package	Items	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Submission deadline/ Opening of Bids	Venue	End user
A	Dental Anesthetics 55,000 carpules	Php 1,360,000.00	April 21, 2006 2:00 p.m.	May 4, 2006 2:00 p.m.	Bulwagan ng Karunungan DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City	Health and Nutrition Center (HNC)
B	Dental Needles 150,000 pieces					
C	Sodium Flouride (NaFl) Powder 4,800 kgs	Php 600,000.00				
	Total	Php 1,960,000.00				

Bids received that exceed the ABC per Package shall be rejected.

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting April 6, 2006 upon payment of the non-refundable fee of PhP2,000.00 in cash to the DepED Cashier.

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(Sgd.) ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson, BAC

(PDI—April 6 & 13, 2006)

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **SCC NAUTICAL TRANSPORT SERVICES, INC.** with office address **DG Jones Office, 8th Floor, Salustiana Dy Building, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New Operator of Domestic Passenger Carrying Vessel** on a **Non-Pioneer** Status with capacity of **10,515,000 Passengers per year** with project/plant site located at **FCI Compound, Road 12, Anonas Street, Sta. Mesa, Manila.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI - April 13, 2006)

OBITUARIES

HENRY P. LANOT

Congressman, Pasig City (1998 – 2004)
City Councilor (1992 – 1998)
On his 1st Death Anniversary, April 13, 2006
Schedule of Requiem Masses offered for the eternal repose of the soul of Henry P. Lanot:

April 12, 2006
6:00 P.M. .... **Immaculate Concepcion Pasig Cathedral**
Bo. Malinao, Pasig City
6:00 P.M. .... **Sto. Rosario Parish**
Bo. Rosario, Pasig City
6:00 P.M. .... **San Antonio Abad Parish**
Bo. Maybunga, Pasig City

April 13, 2006
10:30 A.M. .... **Sta. Clara de Montefalco Parish**
Bo. Caniogan, Pasig City

We, Zenaida C. Lanot; children, Ken, Christian, Henry IV, Angelique, and daughter-in-law Rhoda; grandchildren, Allany & Altthea; and mother, Marina; and brothers and sisters request all his loved ones, relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayers for his bliss and eternal rest.

We would like to thank everyone, who in one way was touched by the meaningful life of Henry (†).

We will miss you, Ebo.

EDUARDO F. GALLARDO

August 12, 1936 – April 11, 2006

His beloved wife Mayette; children Yayen, Jeck & Jun, Jelly & Ricky, Enai & Edwin, Ondo & Maan; Grandchildren Adelle, Bea, Chino, Dianne, Erin, Panpan, Gaea, Hannah, Ian, Jeremy and relatives request for your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

Body lies at Funeraria Paz, Sucat.

DEATH NOTICE

ROLANDO PANLAQUIN VELEZ

has peacefully joined his Creator last March 24, 2006 at the age 47.

He is survived by wife **Elizabeth L. Velez**, only daughter **Michelle L. Velez**, his mother Carmen and brothers Totit, Chicklet, Bubbles and Randy.

He was working in Japan when he suffered an Aneurysm attack.

His remains were returned home to the Philippines days after that fateful incident and laid to rest on April 6, 2006 at the San Rafael Cemetery, Bulacan.

Our Dearly Beloved Papa

Baltazar E. Javier

has peacefully passed onto eternal life.

His loving wife, Letty; his children Jun and Chris, Tazmy and Josie, Girlie and John, Bernie and Gladys, and Jean; grandchildren Celine, Paolo, Raffy, Pie, Tricia, Gail, Ian, Abby, Maki and Angela, and all his relatives and friends request the reader to join them in thanking God for the gift of life and for the hope we all have that he now enjoys the gift of eternal joy in heaven.

His body lies in state at Garden of Memories Memorial Chapels, Bagong Calzada, Pateros, Metro Manila until Easter Sunday.

Interment will be on April 16, 2006 at Garden of Memories Memorial Park, after the 9:00 a.m. funeral mass.

"A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant." Ecclesiastes 3:2

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..." Psalm 23:4

"Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You"
Psalm 56:3

Our Dearly Beloved

PACITA TIMBOL TAYAO

(4 May 1926 - 10 April 2006)

Peacefully joined our Lord on 10 April 2006 at the age of 79.

Her loving husband Eliseo; children Ditas and Bobby Castro; Lisa and Raffy Recto; and grandchildren Krisha and Renz, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz, Inc. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be held at the La Funeraria Paz Crematory on Saturday, April 15, 2006 at 11:30 a.m.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

EMILIA LAO CHUA

who passed away in the Grace of the Lord on April 2, 2006 wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

We design
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For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:

HEAD OFFICE : 897-8808 loc. 514, 516; 899-4425; 897-2535; 897-8425 (Telefax); **CUBAO** : 912-9008 to 11 (Aurora); **MAKATI** : 892-5578, 811-4361, 811-4370; **KALAW** : 528-0213, 527-3342; **MEGAMALL** : 635-0219, 635-0220

ANNOUNCEMENT

In observance of the Holy Week, **INQUIRER** branch offices will be closed on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Black Saturday.

Megamall Branch will be open on Sunday from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
sms feedback: Inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
FITNESS ◎ WEDNESDAY 2BU ◎ THURSDAY FOOD ◎ FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

ALMOND Crusted Salmon Fillet at Old Swiss Inn

Your guide to Lenten dining . . .

WE KNOW, WE KNOW. You can only eat so much tuna. And if you've had sardines for breakfast, chances are you can't bear looking at more sardines for the rest of the day. Here's a short list of what the restaurants are serving on these meatless holy days.

THE OLD SWISS INN'S Lenten specials feature fish, clams and crustaceans. The Almond Crusted Salmon Fillet is grilled salmon fillet encrusted with almond slivers accompanied with asparagus and beurre-blanc sauce. Seashells and Seafood is piping hot tomato-saffron broth with an assortment of braised seashells and seafood served with crusty garlic bread. King Crabs may be steamed, buttered, with black pepper or sweet-chili sauce. Tiger King Prawns may be steamed, included in *sinigang*, thermidore or provencale. Seafood Jambalaya is a rice meal with shrimps, clams and crabmeat, spiced up by Cajun flavorings; while Mariscada is seafood stew of squid, mussels, clams, shrimp and fish. Call 8188251/8180098/ 8121010.

FISH & CO. shines the spotlight on barramundi, a distant relative of the Australian bass, this Lenten season.

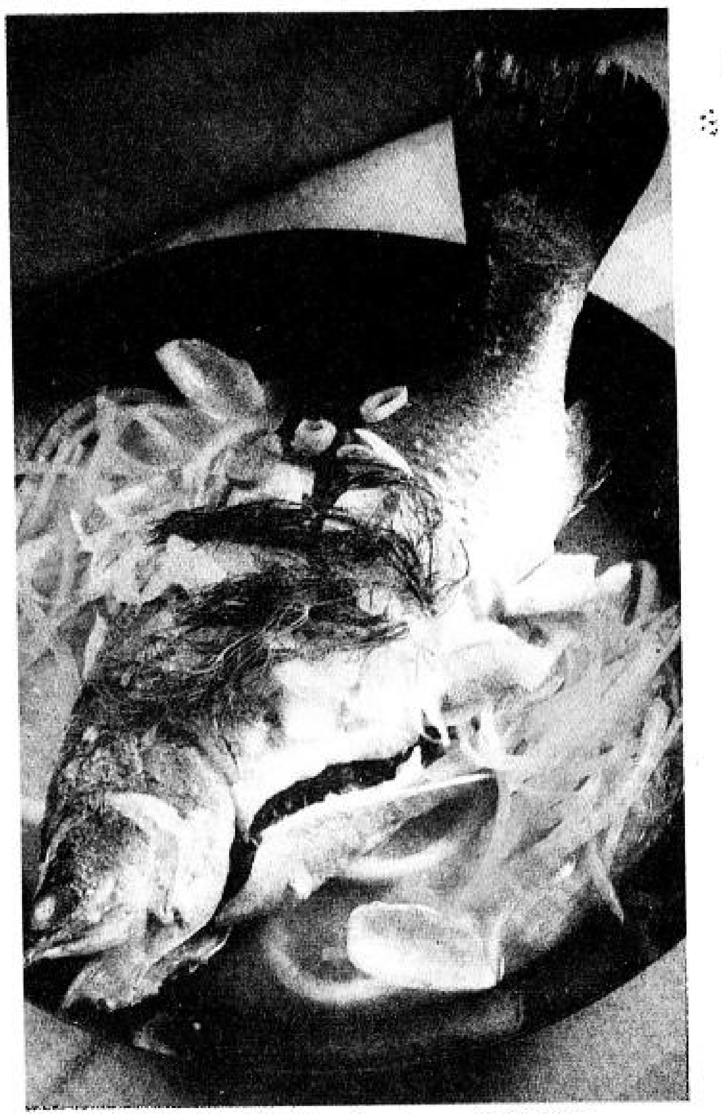
Whole, fresh barramundi is steamed in citrus fennel sauce for a texture that is tender and a flavor that is sweet and succulent. Other fresh fish and seafood dishes are also available this Lent or any time of the year. They include Fish & Chips, Sweet and Sour Fish, Black Pepper Mahi-Mahi, Whole Line Fish and Fish Collar. Also available are Peri-peri Prawns, Seafood Fondue, Seafood Platter, Fresh and Baked Oysters, crabs (with choice of black pepper, Portuguese chili and garlic sauce), Fried or Grilled Calamari, mussels (baked with garlic crust or in garlic and lemon butter), Prawn Fritters, Tuna Salad, and pastas like the Mussels Pene and Prawn Fettucini.

Fish & Co. is at the Fun Dining Area, 3/F Greenbelt 3, Makati, 7297431/32; and G/F Streetscape, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City. Call 9102140 and 42.

C2 CLASSIC CUISINE presents "Sugbahan sa C2." The *sugba* food promotion includes grilled fresh seafood and meat medley with either Ensaladang Tagalog or Ensaladang Mangga. C2 also offers Pamatid-uhaw drinks like Iced Minty Cucumber, Kahel Soda and Kiwi Basil Cooler. Offering classic Filipino favorites, C2 is at the 6/L, Shangri-La Mall, Mandaluyong. Call 6361510/1509.

LJC RESTAURANT Group's Café Havana (Malate, Greenbelt and Cebu), features hearty, healthy and delicious selections for the Lenten season. There's the Blue Marlin with Sofrito, pan-fried blue marlin topped with Mexican-style capsicum salsa with buttered vegetables on the side, and the Blackened Salmon Steak, a generous slab of pan-grilled salmon steak served with blackened rice in sweet paprika and cumin, with vegetable sidings.

PIZZA HUT presents the Seafood Festival, its Lenten season offering—seafood fare for meatless days. The festival is ongoing until April 15. Choose from its "Seafood for the Soul" selections: Calamari pizza, crisp squid rings with Thousand Island dressing; Calamari appetizer, crisp squid rings served with creamy garlic soup; Shrimp Paella, shrimps in mildly sweet and spicy garlic sauce served over paella rice; Mango Shrimp Salad, Romaine lettuce tossed in mango dressing and topped with garlic shrimps, fresh mango slices, tomatoes and sesame seeds; and Garlic Shrimp and Mushrooms, spaghetti with sautéed shrimps and mushrooms in garlic-butter sauce.



BARRAMUNDI steamed in citrus fennel sauce at Fish & Co.

. . . and Easter egg-hunting, partying

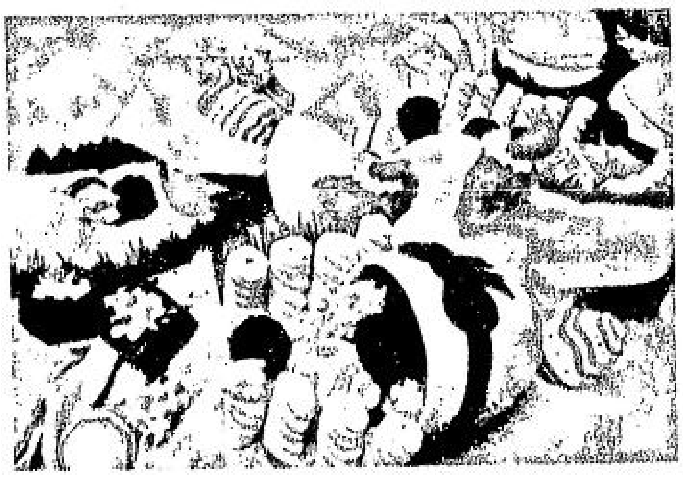
WHAT TO DO WITH THE KIDS WHO are screaming to go Easter egg-hunting? Here's a list that may just save your sanity this Sunday and earn you good points with the little ones.

HOTEL PHILIPPINE PLAZA offers a Happy Hoppy Easter package. Take the Easter Sunday brunch at Spiral or check in April 9-16 and get tickets to the hotel's Easter event. Activities include hourly egg hunts, magic show with puppets and exotic birds, and parlor games. Interactive activities include Disney Princess Dress-up Photo booth sponsored by Epson, arts and crafts by Lyra, and face-painting. Hero Channel cartoons will also be shown throughout the day. Lots of prizes await winners in different contests. Call 5515555.

DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO presents Easter Family Fair 10 a.m.-3 p.m., April 16, at the Grand Ballroom. Have an Easter family brunch at The Café buffet at P950+ for adults and P475+ for kids (12 years and below) to get a free access coupon to the event. Or avail of the Easter Room Package (April 10-16) and get an access coupon. Dine at any of the hotel's Asian specialty restaurants on April 16. A minimum single purchase worth P950 also gets you a coupon to the fair. Parents and guardians accompanying kids are free of charge. Kids can enjoy kiddie parlor games, shows, Osh Kosh B'Gosh and Cinderella fashion show, Merit's art activity, and Easter egg hunt, among others. Prizes in the egg hunt include resort stay at the Pearl Farm Beach Resort, Taal Vista, Puerto Azul, day tour at The Farm at San Benito and accommodations at Dusit for the family. Call 8673333.

THE RICHMONDE GRILL serves an Easter lunch buffet for P900 net per person, inclusive of a free pass to the Easter Sunday Party. Children 5-12 years old get a 50-percent discount while kids 4 years old and below are free. The Easter Sunday Party, to be held 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., features game booths, prizes, egg hunt, and magic show by Lou Hilario. Also offered are discounts on room accommodations till April 23. Kids can join Easter fun activities. Children 5 years old and below get a complimentary one-hour GymPlay access at Gymboree Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Room packages range from P2,700+ to P4,500+, with bigger discounts if you stay for three nights. Call 6898419.

PAN PACIFIC MANILA offers magic shows, egg hunts and swimming. Those who come in costumes can win a special Easter package. The party at the poolside begins at 2 p.m. Easter loot bags filled with candies, toys and Pan Pacific items will be given to all kids. Rate per adult is P750+ and per child is P550+ (kids 7-12 years old), while 3-6-year-olds get 50-percent discount. Children 2 years old and below are free of charge. The package is inclusive of a kiddie buffet. Call 5360788.



THE HERITAGE Hotel Manila celebrates "A Hoppy Easter Sunday." Have the Easter Buffet Lunch at Restaurant Riviera for P999+ (adult) and P599+ (child) and the family can join games at Riviera and the poolside. Featured are magician, clown, balloon sculpture, face-painting and the traditional egg-hunting, among others. A special prize will be given for best Easter costume. Call 8548888.

EASTER egg candies from Goodies and Sweets at the Podium

INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA starts Easter Sunday with a Mass at the Skytop at 10 a.m. You can then have a brunch buffet at 11 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom. Other highlights of the day include meet-and-greet sessions with Nickelodeon favorites SpongeBob SquarePants and Patrick Star, children's fashion show by Guess USA and egg-hunting. There will be raffles and giveaways to kids. Guests may also relax by the garden or take a dip in the pool until 6 p.m. Children have a separate pool. Prices are P950+ for adults, P475+ for kids aged 4-12, and P250+ for kids aged 4 and younger. Call 8159711.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL MANILA presents Toys 'N Treats—An Easter Extravaganza, 9 a.m.-12 noon, April 16, at its ballroom, to be kicked off by a parade of Enchanted Kingdom mascots. Other activities include egg-painting contest, face-painting session, Nickelodeon art contest, kiddie fashion show by Jam of Rustan's, a B-daman tournament, EK magic show and concert, Bratz glitter tattoo corner and kiddie salon, and other fun games. Prizes include overnight accommodations for two with breakfast at Mandarin Oriental Manila. Kids can bring home loot bags with M&M candies and chocolates.

Easter egg hunt tickets cost P500 net each kid, inclusive of a loot bag and basket; and P300 net each adult. A complimentary egg hunt ticket comes with the Easter Sunday lunch buffet at Tin Hau, priced at P1,288+ (adults) and P688+ (children); The Tivoli, P1,688+ and P888+; and Paseo Uno, P1,488+ and P788+.

People who avail of a special Easter room package for local residents till April 17 get two complimentary Easter egg hunt tickets. Special Easter hampers from P1,000+ are available at the Mandarin Deli. Call 7508888.

FESTIVAL SUPERMALL will hold an egg hunt, 1-4 p.m., April 16 at Pixie Forest Amusement Center. Contestants simply have to buy two sheets of 10 ride tickets at Pixie Forest or X-Site or P200 worth of Tom's World tokens. In the Easter Popping Game, children have to pop a balloon to win live bunnies and other prizes. A minimum purchase of P500 at any shop or three sheets of ride tickets at Pixie Forest earns one entry ticket. Call 8503514.

SHANGRI-LA Plaza's Easter children's party is at 1-5 p.m. at the Grand Atrium Level 2. The hunt is open to parent-child teams. Each team must be composed of children 2-12 years old with either parent as partner. The program includes a magic show with illusion, unicyclist and juggling exhibition, food carts and loot bags. Registration is P300 per team on a first-come, first-served basis. Only 200 teams will be accepted. Call 6337851-70.

THE BELLEVUE HOTEL is holding an Easter party in its grand ballroom. Acrobats, stiltwalkers, unicyclists, jugglers, clowns, fire eaters, magicians, and animals that can do tricks will be featured. The price of P895+ covers the show and buffet with hot and cold selections, grilled items, carving, kiddie food stations and Easter egg hunt. Kids below 12 years old get giveaways, while buffet is free for kids below 6. Those who only want to see the show will be charged P200 (adults) and P250 (kids). Call 7718181.

POWER PLANT has cuddly bunnies awaiting kids at its third annual Easter Sunday celebration at The Rockwell Tent from 11 a.m. Bunnies will be given away to kids who join the activities that include balloon sculpting, glitter tattooing, storytelling,

. . . AND EASTER/ C3

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO

invites everyone to join the annual
Easter family day!
egg hunt
bubble show
kite flying
raffle prizes
fun in the sun
fishing
Entrance is Free!

Easter, a time for celebration and family get-togethers. Of welcoming the risen Savior with the whole of Christendom. This coming Easter Sunday, The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio invites everyone to join the annual Easter Family Day and have loads of fun with the whole family.

SCHEDULE of EVENTS

8:00am	Eucharistic Mass
9:15am	Egg Hunt Briefing
9:30am	Easter Egg Hunt
10:15am	Bunny Roletta Raffle
10:45am	Bubble Show
11:30am	Awarding Ceremony

Don't miss the chance to have some good clean family fun this Easter. Come to The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio and make this Easter Sunday a truly memorable one. For inquiries, call 845 2334 to 38 loc.147 and 188.

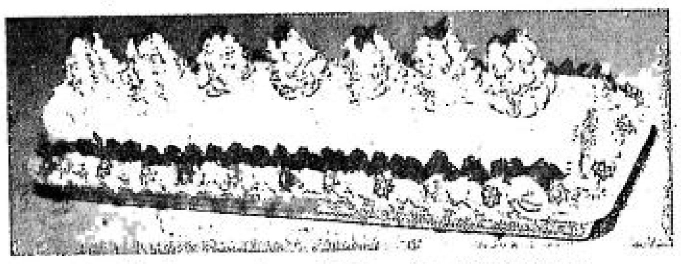
The Heritage Park , Fort Bonifacio
Bayani Road corner C-5, Taguig City

OVERALL WINNER. The team of Jason Ngo, Kevin Agcaoili, Kriselda Jiao and Rizalino Manas of De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management (SHRIM) wins the 1st Goldilocks Cake Decorating Challenge.

CEU
I LOVE YOU DAD

CENTRO Escolar University wins the Best in 8" x 12" Rectangular Cake Design.

A STUDENT displays her creative skill in sprucing up a round cake.



BEST in Roll Design award goes to University of Santo Tomas.

Whipping up a winner

DLSU-St. Benilde team tops cake decorating contest

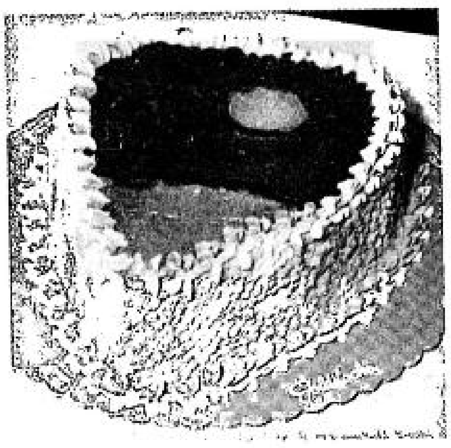
Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperas

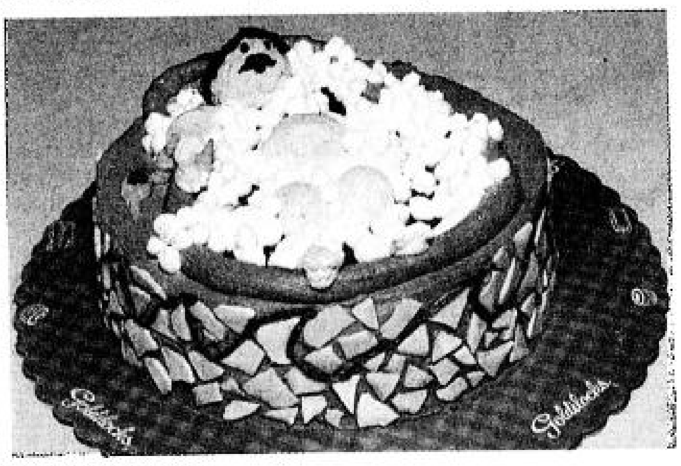
SUGAR, BUTTER, WHIPPED CREAM AND A lot of patience made four students of De La Salle University-College of St. Benilde overall winners of the recent Goldilocks 1st Intercollegiate Cake Decorating Challenge at the Robinsons Galleria fountain area.

The team of Kevin Agcaoili, Rizalino Manas, Criselda Giao and Jason Ngo bagged P20,000 worth of Goldilocks gift certificates and medals, and a baking showcase of P250,000 plus a trophy for their school.

DLSU-St. Benilde displayed its decorating skills and creative talents in adorning cakes for festive occasions. St. Benilde, which also won the Best in 8" Round Cake Design category, received the highest average score in the on-the-spot competition.

Eight schools vied for top honors—University of Santo Tomas (UST), Centro Escolar University (CEU), Emilio Aguinaldo College (EAC), OB Montessori Greenhills, Olivarez College, Philippine Women's University (PWU), San Sebastian College (SSC) and St. Benilde.





ST. Benilde also wins the Best in 8" Round Cake Design (above); Philippine Women's University earns the Best in Heart-shaped Design (left).

The competition was patterned after the hit television show "Iron Chef," with students sharing the stage and one central supply bin with decorative materials, such as sprinkles, candies, toppers, etc. They had to decorate their cakes within a specified period of time.

Teams had two hours to decorate four cakes: a roll, an 8" round, an 8"x12" rectangular and a heart-shaped. A total of eight cakes—one from each team—were presented per category.

Participants scooped out large dollops of whipped cream to give the cake a thicker layer of icing. Cakes came in different colors and shapes—some resembling a log. Many chose floral motifs.

Many of the cakes had everything from fruits to candies to flowers on them. Competitors finished the cakes with chocolate toppings, pineapple or strawberry glaze to fit the occasion.

40th year

The cake challenge was part of Goldilocks' celebration of its 40th anniversary (it was founded in May 1966). It was co-sponsored by Avoset Pour N Whip Cream.

The contest, said Pinky Yee, Goldilocks' marketing director and one of the judges, aimed to give college students, particularly future pastry chefs, a venue to showcase their creativity and talents.

Judges included Eddy Chan, regional marketing manager for Southeast Asia of the Presto-Avoset Group; Helene Pontejos, general manager of Great Food Solutions of San Miguel-Pure Foods Company; culinary expert Heny Sison; and talent manager Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano.

Cakes were rated on creativity, appearance, technique and use of materials. Taste wasn't part of the rating equation.

While judges were deliberating, internationally acclaimed cake decorator Dien Tang from Vietnam trimmed a cake on the spot. He showcased an elaborate birthday cake with a cute pig relaxing in a bathtub. Using only Avoset whipped cream, he finished the job in 15 minutes.

Aside from St. Benilde, other winners were: UST, Best in Roll Design; PWU, Best in Heart-shaped Design; and CEU, Best in 8" x 12" Rectangular Cake Design.

The winning team in each category received P10,000 worth of Goldilocks gift certificates and medals, while the school got a baking showcase worth P50,000 and a trophy. Non-winning teams received P5,000 worth of Goldilocks gift certificates and baking supplies worth P10,000, and certificates of appreciation for the school.

"All of the students worked so well together," said Yee. "It was a real team effort. Some of their designs were really impressive, even at par with commercially available cakes. It's amazing that these were made on-the-spot by students. The level of talent that the Filipino youth has is overwhelming."

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

Readers' insights on Filipino food abroad

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

MY COLUMN ON FILIPINO FOOD BREAKING into the international scene elicited so many comments from here and abroad. What was surprising was getting e-mail from two Jesuit priests.

Fr. Boom Martinez, SJ, wrote from California where he described the food at home in his community as "always American/Italian/old-white-man food."

He misses Filipino food but he disputes my cheerful estimation that Filipino food will find its place in the culinary map. He has lived in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and is, currently, in San Francisco.

While most patrons of Filipino restaurants are Pinoys, Thai and Vietnamese restaurants are full of "non-natives," as he puts it.

"Most of my [non-Filipino] friends know a bit about our food, but just a bit. They all know *pancit* and *lumpia* (always mispronounced) and maybe even *adobo*. But that is usually the extent of their general knowledge. Again, they can name lots of Thai, Vietnamese, Indian, Korean, etc. dishes."

Fr. Martinez's impatience is understandable but we can't stop trying. Even if Glenda Barretto, in several World Expos, has been successful in giving a glimpse and a taste of our cuisine, the effort "has not been duplicated on a large scale."

I did write about how we're promoting our food, albeit slowly. Now, I'm glad to announce that next week, Project Kulinarya will be launched. This is the effort by cooks and cuisine experts to standardize about 40 dishes such as *adobo, pakbet* and *caldereta*. More on this in next week's column.

The other priest is Xavier L. Olin, SJ. He said he was in Nagoya, Japan during the Expo where he "feasted on *adobo*... at the Philippine booth." And how, "taste- and presentation-wise, they did an excellent job there."

Apart from his innate love for good food, especially the Bicol cooking of his home province, Fr. Olin reminisced about the course in Philippine Culture taught by the late Doreen G. Fernandez to 11 young Jesuits.

"She took us to places new and old, from exotic Balaw-Balaw of Angono to [then] newly opened KSP (Kainan sa Pasig) to Binondo street fare to Manang's clubhouse right in our backyard at the Ateneo campus."

When readers share such information, I have this urge to go to the places I haven't been to just to find out if I'm missing out on the fun.

Fr. Olin also mentioned a colleague, Fr. Ting Samson, SJ, who brought boxes of dried fish to Mindanao from Naga. Those were "new look" and *espada*.

Espada is thinly sliced swordfish but Fr. Olin couldn't remember the real name of "new look," describing it as having "grayish silver skin" and very oily even when it had been dried.

Those two e-mail messages make me wonder what it is with Jesuits and food. But when Fr. Olin wrote how I might want to visit two web sites—www.thejesuitgourmet.blogspot.com and www.jesuitrecipes.blogspot.com—I concluded that food must be one of the things one must enjoy to be a Jesuit.

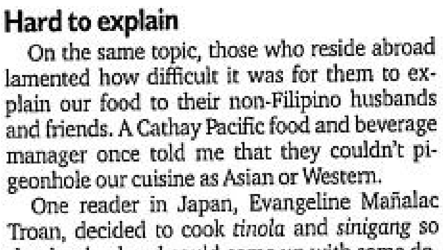
Hard to explain

On the same topic, those who reside abroad lamented how difficult it was for them to explain our food to their non-Filipino husbands and friends. A Cathay Pacific food and beverage manager once told me that they couldn't pigeonhole our cuisine as Asian or Western.

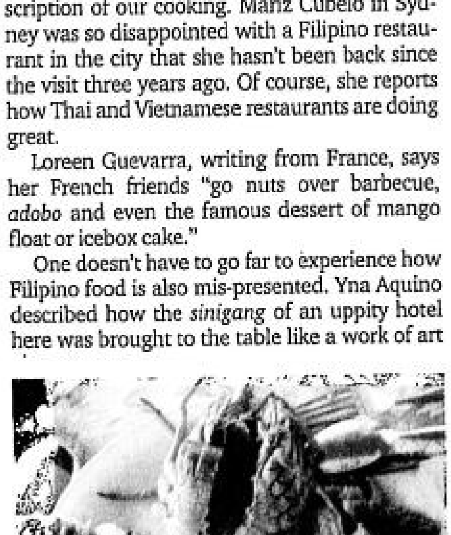
One reader in Japan, Evangeline Mañalac Troan, decided to cook *tinola* and *sinigang* so that her husband could come up with some description of our cooking. Mariz Cubelo in Sydney was so disappointed with a Filipino restaurant in the city that she hasn't been back since the visit three years ago. Of course, she reports how Thai and Vietnamese restaurants are doing great.

Loreen Guevarra, writing from France, says her French friends "go nuts over barbecue, *adobo* and even the famous dessert of mango float or icebox cake."

One doesn't have to go far to experience how Filipino food is also mis-presented. Yna Aquino described how the *sinigang* of an uppity hotel here was brought to the table like a work of art with lots of trimmings but was nowhere near the traditional in terms of taste. One chef on television called *sinigang* something else—steamed fish in tamarind sauce.



FILIPINO food presented naturally. *Tilapia*, lobster and *pakbet* feast in Ilocos



PINAKBET presentation by a food stylist.
PHOTO FROM "PHILIPPINE CUISINE: A COUNTRY'S HERITAGE"

And why, Aquino asks, should our food be identified on television only as extreme cuisine such as the *balut*?

Since I mentioned several food writers who had written on Filipino food, Minette Quimson, who writes book reviews, reported that some of our recipes were included in Mark Bittman's "The Best Recipes in the World." Those were chicken *adobo*, fresh *lumpia* and *salabat*.

I remember reprinting Bittman's *adobo* version in another paper and thought it charming that his daughter who didn't like chicken would only eat chicken *adobo*.

Quimson says while *adobo* and *lumpia* are identified as cuisine from the Philippines, *salabat* is "classified under Southeast Asian cuisine but I don't know of any other Southeast Asian country that uses '*salabat*' to describe ginger tea."

Landmark

The Dizon Bakery column made Arnold Bautista homesick for Cavite City and the bakery that he says is a landmark. When he and his family used to visit relatives in Cavite, his grandmother would require them to buy *quesillo* (*kesong puti*) only from Dizon's. And his father used to buy *pan de bomba*. The owner, Amparo Bartolome, couldn't say what *pan de bomba* is.

Reader Bautista wondered if it was the Queen bread (*monay*) while Myrna Segismundo, a niece of Bartolome, surmised it might be the *pan de putok* or *pan de suelo*.

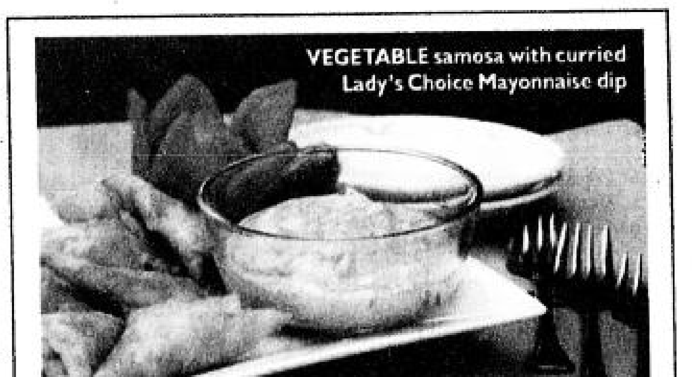
A surprising e-mail also about the bakery column was from Oscar Robledo Ballesteros in Spain. I had to have the following translated since my 12 units of Spanish didn't make me confident enough to guess what he was asking: "*He visto su artículo* Country Cooking *en* Internet. *Sólo una pregunta, ¿de dónde ha sacado usted el nombre de la protagonista* Amparo Bartolomé?"

He asked about the owner of the bakery, that much I gathered. So I answered in English that Bartolome was the owner and if the name sounded familiar, it might only be because many Filipinos had Spanish names. His name is also familiar and someone here must be carrying the name.

And now a correction from Rose Guanio on the column on the book "Potluck: Hidalgo Bonding." It seems I wrote that Rufina Zamora married Augusto Hidalgo.

Rose explains, "I happen to be a granddaughter of Rufina Zamora and Rafael Hidalgo." Writing that column, I had the book in front of me just to make sure I got names and connections correctly. But I suffer from some form of dyslexia. I read Rafael and wrote Augusto. Go figure.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04 @yahoo.com



VEGETABLE samosa with curried Lady's Choice Mayonnaise dip

Connecting the dips

By Michaela Fenix

HOW TO CONNECT A WOMAN to her words? That was the puzzle presented at the launch of Lady's Choice "Food for Thought" in celebration of Women's Month.

Five successful women were asked to create their particular dips and give some clue, through their words, what dip they concocted.

Some were easy to guess.

It was a cinch connecting Tessa Prieto Valdez to "What's stopping you from expressing yourself?" That day, she expressed herself with a fluffy creation of pink and lavender shades. True to the color of her dress, she chose samosa with a dip of mayo mixed with curry.

Risa Mananquil Samson made guessing easy by comparing the versatility of mayonnaise to "the little black dress." But, of course, you had to know she's a fashion model. She made a mayo-tomato relish for chicken meatballs.

An ironic frame of mind was needed to connect Dr. Vicki Belo to "fat is beautiful." Her clinics do deal with a lot of fat, taking it off from certain areas and putting it where it is needed for a makeover.

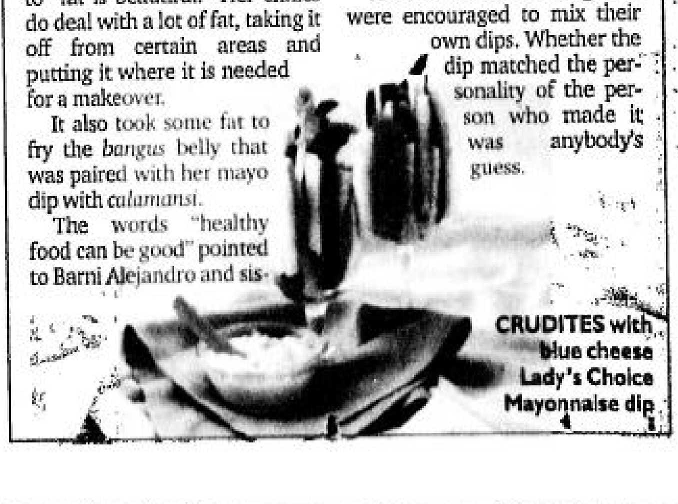
It also took some fat to fry the *bangus* belly that was paired with her mayo dip with *calamansi*.

The words "healthy food can be good" pointed to Barni Alejandro and sister Rachel who are in the business of providing South Beach Diet meals. The sisters act goes by the name "The Sexy Chef." It was no surprise that their vegetable crudites was spiced up with a mayo-blue cheese dip.

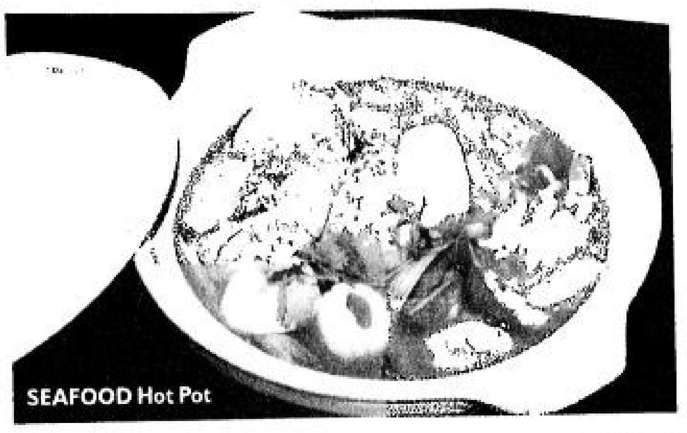
Doyee Tumpalan keeps beautiful in spite of her busy schedule training her sales force in her First Quadrant network marketing business. Her food for thought sounds something like she would say in her training work: When a woman sets her mind to do anything, she does it so well. She must love the taste of *wansoy* (coriander leaves) because her *lumpia* had *kani* (artificial crab meat) and *wansoy*. She continued the Japanese influence in her dip—mayo with *wansoy* and wasabi.

The finger foods were among the appetizers for the lunch at the Metropolitan Museum on Roxas Boulevard. The puzzle mode was set from the very beginning as guests were asked to go through a maze with shaggy carpeting for walls making you feel like you were entering a car cleaning corridor.

A table was set where guests were encouraged to mix their own dips. Whether the dip matched the personality of the person who made it was anybody's guess.



CRUDITES with blue cheese Lady's Choice Mayonnaise dip


SEAFOOD Hot Pot

FISH with Tofu

THE DIM SUM is worth a visit.

A bald approach to cooking

A WAITER, dressed like a monk, presents one of the restaurant's favorites, the Crispy Noodles.

Text by Belle V. Bondoc
Photos by Romy Homillada

Chinese Monk serves Cantonese dishes, gourmet style

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD of Chinese Monk, that cozy dining area in Power Plant Mall that serves traditional Cantonese cuisine.

Unlike most Chinese restaurants, though, here you don't need to fret over the use of *vetsin* or MSG (monosodium glutamate).

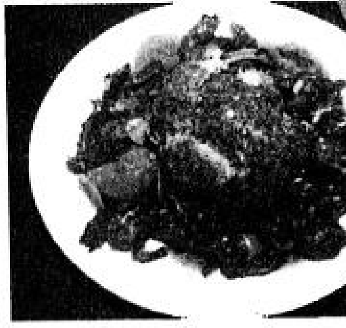
Chinese Monk, a member of the Burgoo chain of restaurants, has been operating for almost two years now and continues to gain popularity not only among Chinese-food lovers but also among diners with discriminating tastes.

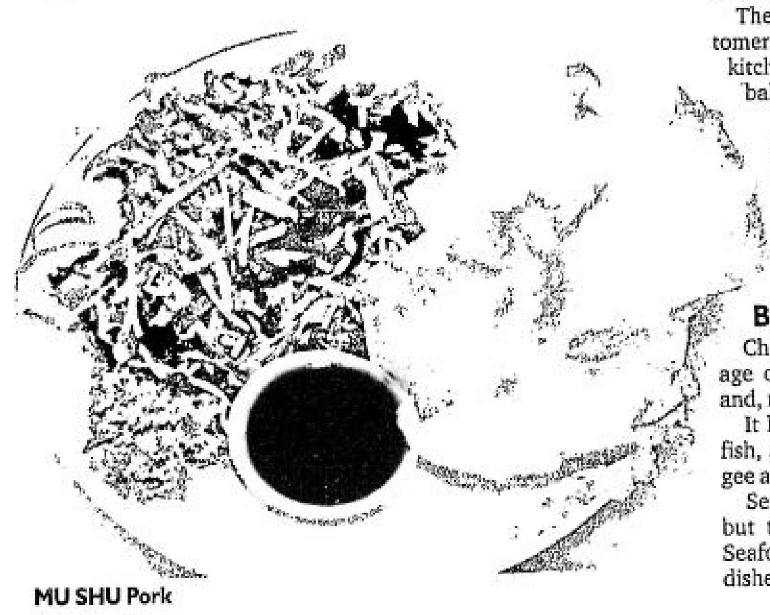
"We believe in producing quality because, if you produce quality, you get the business," says managing director Albert Alavera. "We know what the customers want, what they want to eat."

The restaurant serves Cantonese dishes, gourmet-style. The cooking technique, according to Alavera, relies less on frying and sauces, and more on natural flavors and spices.

"The dishes are cooked using the freshest ingredients and we have certain preparation methods to retain the unique flavor and texture of every dish," says Alavera.

He has been in the restaurant business for 22 years. He has a partner in overseeing the operations of the restaurant. They source and plan the menu, and manage and train the staff.


BEEF with Broccoli


MU SHU Pork

Modern interiors

The 160-seat restaurant is the biggest inside Power Plant.

The modern but homey interiors designed by Grace Milan features a series of solid geometrical shapes. Black and red define the place. Fine furniture and well-placed lighting lend elegance to the restaurant. Neatly arranged artworks featuring a monk hang on the walls.

An image of a young monk at the corner of the main entrance greets diners. On the opposite corner is a big gong usually seen in Chinese temples as a sign of welcome.

The open kitchen is designed to let customers see how their meals are prepared. The kitchen staff consists of 20 men, all of them bald.

"That's our basic requirement—[no falling hair] to make sure that hygiene is observed during food preparation," says Alavera.

An open-air space lets guests dine al fresco while enjoying a view of the garden.

Bestsellers, favorites

Chinese Monk offers diners a whole package of relaxing ambience, excellent service and, most importantly, quality food.

It has a variety of dishes of meat, poultry, fish, seafood and vegetables, as well as congee and noodles.

Servings are big enough for whole families but the prices are surprisingly reasonable. Seafood dishes cost P195-P395 while beef dishes range from P175 to P245.

"We have revised our menu. Now we are offering about 45 dishes, comprising mainly of the bestsellers and customers' favorites," says Alavera.

The dim sum is a must-try. Each delectable plate of the little snacks, a trademark of Cantonese cuisine, holds three or four pieces for P65. Dim sum selection includes *kuchay* dumpling, shrimp *hakao*, chicken feet, shark's fin and pork *siomai*, among others.

The appetizer that is the current box-office hit is the Mu-Shu Pork—stir-fried pork cooked with light seasonings and flavorful sauce, combined with exotic vegetables like shredded scallions, tiger lily buds, wood ears and bean sprouts. Traditionally, it is served in pancakes.

ALBERT Alavera is also a wizard in the kitchen.

The restaurant's concept of Cantonese gourmet-style cooking is evident in the beef and meat dishes, which are cooked with very light seasonings. Preparation usually involves stir-frying with a little water.

Of the main dishes, Alavera recommends the Beef with Broccoli, Oriental Baby Back Ribs and Spicy Spareribs.

The restaurant is especially proud of its Kung Pao dishes with spicy sauce mixed with vegetables and crunchy peanuts. Diners can choose from beef, pork, chicken and seafood varieties, though chicken seems to be the more popular.

The Seafood Hot Pot combination of Pacific clams, shrimps and squid is also a favorite.

Other signature dishes include the Fish with Tofu Hot Pot, Braised Duck with Three Mushrooms, and the Salt and Pepper Cuttlefish. The must-try desserts are Banana Rolls and Banana Samosa.

The restaurant offers complimentary chrysanthemum tea with its sinfully delicious desserts. Like wines, certain dishes have to be matched with particular teas. Tea, whether taken before, during or after a meal, is considered necessary for the enjoyment of Chinese cuisine.

Diners vary depending on time and day. On weekdays, the noontime crowd consists mainly of office workers. On weekends, Chinese Monk becomes a perfect venue for family gatherings.

The restaurant is also ideal for business and social functions like weddings and baptism. It offers special party packages and set menus for as low as P175 per person.

Chinese Monk is at 1/L, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati. It is open daily, 11 a.m.-2 a.m. the following day. It will deliver for a minimum purchase of P500 within the vicinity (Makati and Mandaluyong). Call 8973785, 8974129 and 8969429.

E-mail the author at bbondoc@inquirer.com.ph

Sandwiches for meatless days

HERE ARE SANDWICHES SUITABLE FOR meatless Holy Week.

Gardenia Healthy Tuna Asparagus Sandwich

8 slices Gardenia Classic White Bread (thick slice)
1 can tuna, drained
2 tbsp chopped onions
2 tbsp pickle relish
½ c mayonnaise
pepper to taste
1 can white asparagus

1. In a bowl, combine tuna, onions, pickle relish and mayonnaise.
2. Season with salt and pepper. Blend well.
3. Spread filling on one side of the bread, top with asparagus spears and lettuce.
4. Cover with another slice of bread and cut diagonally. Serve with potato chips.

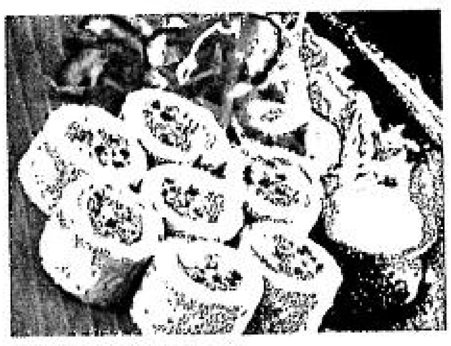
Makes 4 sandwiches.

Gardenia Maki Treats

6 slices Gardenia Classic White Bread
1 can tuna in water, drained
¼ c mayonnaise
1 tbsp chopped red bell pepper
1 tbsp green onions
½ tsp salt
1/8 tsp ground black pepper
4 slices cheese

1. Mix together tuna, mayonnaise, bell pepper and onions. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Spread mixture evenly over bread.
3. Place a slice of cheese then roll tightly.
4. Wrap rolls in plastic wrap or aluminum foil and chill for at least 1 hour.
5. Slice into 1-inch pieces and serve cut-side up to show filling.

Makes 3-4 servings.


GARDENIA Maki Treats

. . . and Easter egg-hunting, partying

From page C1

arts and crafts, and egg hunt. Toys and treats are given by Kidz Station, Crabtree & Evelyn, and Chicco. The program features magic, acrobatic and bubble shows. Pre-registration ends April 15. For P450, a child gets the Easter fiesta passport. Each passport entitles a kid to a Hershey's loot bag, gift certificate from Q Power Station, a free game at Power Bowl, and a 30-percent discount from Crabtree & Evelyn.

THE PODIUM presents a magical Easter Sunday where kids can meet the giant bunny of TK by Toy Kingdom or check out the cute and cuddly Gund Rabbit, Gray Thumper Bunny and Blue Bunny. Greet friends and family members a Happy Easter with egg candies, cookies, and personal-sized Carrot Cakes coated with white icing and decorated with a marzipan carrot.

INTERCON'S Easter egg hunt features raffles.

Highlighting the celebration is the Easter Magical Show by magicians Carl Orbon and Jester Tallod at the mall's lounge area. Kids can join with a minimum purchase of P500 April 15-16. Registration for the event, a project of TK by Toy Kingdom and The Podium, will be at 11 a.m. The show and games will start at 1 p.m.

THE OLD SWISS INN Makati branch offers a lunch buffet that includes its popular Corned Beef Carving. The day's featured dessert is Toblerone Chocolate Fondue. Buffet price is P600 (plus VAT and SC) per person. Children below 5 years old pay half. The price also includes a magic show and Easter giveaways.

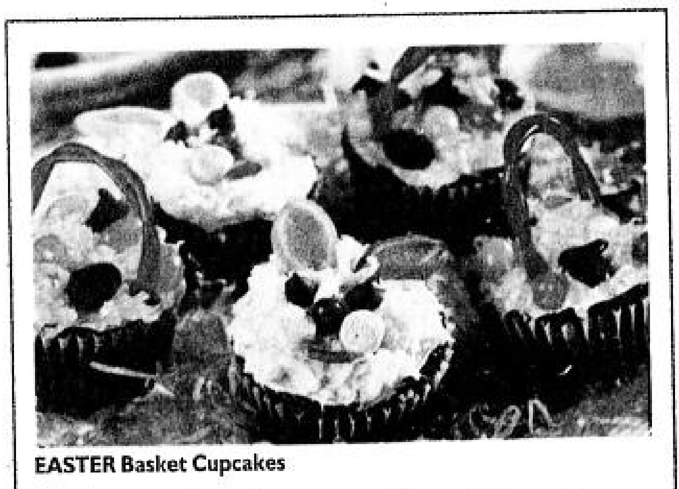
POWERBOOKS presents a fun and egg-citing lineup for Easter.

With the Easter Egg Design contest, you can paint your favorite Disney character on an Easter egg and get a chance to win P1,000 worth of products from Benby and PowerBooks.

At PowerBooks Greenbelt and Alabang, kids 3-9 years old can join the Dress Up As Your Favorite Disney Character contest.

The traditional Easter Egg Hunt will be held at PowerBooks Greenbelt and Alabang while PowerBooks and Disney Time Warner's Easter Eggscapade party will be held at PowerBooks Greenbelt.

PowerBooks Specialty Store has branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334/ 5243448).


EASTER Basket Cupcakes

Candy hunt for Easter

TREAT KIDS TO HERSHEY'S chocolates this Easter with this recipe.

Easter Basket Cupcakes

2 c sugar
1 ¾ c all-purpose flour
¾ c Hershey's Cocoa, or
1 ½ tsp baking powder
1 ½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
2 eggs
1 c milk
½ c vegetable oil
2 tsp vanilla extract
1 c boiling water
1 can (16 oz) creamy vanilla ready-to-spread frosting
3 ¾ c Sweetened Coconut Flakes, tinted*
Assorted Hershey's Chocolates (Hershey's Kissables, Hershey's Baking Chips, Hershey's Kisses)

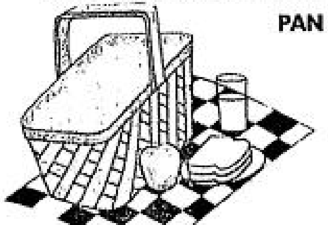
1. Heat oven to 350 °F. Line muffin cups (2 ½ inches in diameter) with paper bake cups.
2. Stir together sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt in large bowl. Add eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; beat on medium speed of electric mixer for 2 minutes. Stir in boiling water (batter will be thin). Fill muffin cups 2/3 full with batter.
3. Bake 22-25 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely.
4. To make Easter baskets, frost each cupcake with vanilla frosting. Immediately make "nest" on top of each cupcake with tinted coconut; place assorted candy in nests.

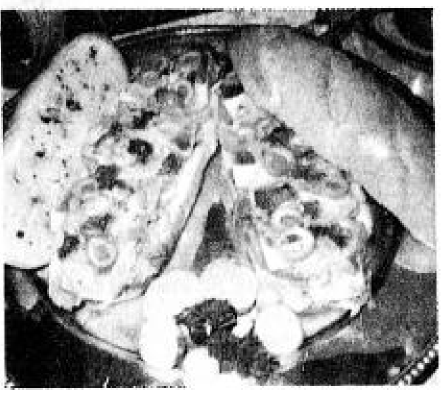
**Note: To tint coconut, combine several drops of green food color with ¾ tsp water; add to 1 ½ c coconut. Stir until evenly tinted. Repeat using blue, pink or yellow food color.*

SCOTCH Eggs. As Thomas says, not for the fainthearted, but so good, eaten hot or cold.

CHEF Thomas Wenger, executive chef of Mandarin Oriental

PAN Bagnat Ayala





PAIN Bagnat à la Wenger

CHEF David Pardo de Ayala, executive chef, Discovery Suites

Bread doesn't have to be simple and boring when served al fresco

More picnic ideas from top chefs

Part 2

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

AS PROMISED, HERE are more recipes from the top chefs who help me put together a dream picnic right in my own backyard.

Thomas Wenger (executive chef Mandarin Oriental) says this is not for the fainthearted. But it's so good, eaten hot or cold.

Scotch Eggs

4 pcs hard-boiled eggs, peeled
160 g veal meat, minced finely
100 g heavy cream
20 g carrot, brunoise
20 g leek, brunoise
40 g onions, chopped finely
10 g parsley, chopped
10 g butter
20 g white flour
2 pcs egg
Salt
Pepper from the mill
Paprika powder
Breadcrumbs
Oil for deep-frying

Sauté onions in butter until translucent.

Add chopped parsley, set aside to cool.

Blanch carrot brunoise in salt water, shock in ice water.

In a food processor, combine minced veal meat with one egg, slowly incorporate the heavy cream. Season with salt, pepper and paprika powder. Remove mixture from processor.

In a bowl, over ice, combine veal mixture with onions, carrots. Combine until they become a smooth, homogenous mixture. Adjust seasoning.

Cover the hard-boiled egg with the mixture completely.

Beat the remaining egg.

Dredge the coated eggs in flour, then dip them into the egg, and cover them well with bread crumbs.

Deep-fry until golden and crispy.

Serve with mustard dip.

Mustard dip:
1 ½ tsp English mustard
½ tsp paprika powder
2 tbsp sour cream
1 c mayonnaise
1 pc spring onion, chopped finely

Combine all ingredients. Adjust seasoning.

Pain Bagnat à la Wenger

1 baguette (French bread), whole wheat or rustic
200 g tuna loin
4 anchovies fillets, drained
200 g ripe tomatoes
6 cornichons sliced lengthwise
½ lemon, juice freshly squeezed
½ onion, sliced very thinly
6 pcs kalamata olives, pitted
20 g capers
Sea salt
Pepper from the mill

Olive oil dressing:
3 tbsp virgin olive oil
1 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 clove garlic, crushed
3 g Italian parsley, chopped
3 g basil leaves, chopped
1 tsp Dijon mustard

Cut baguette in half, lengthwise.

In a bowl, combine olive oil dressing ingredients: mustard, parsley, garlic, basil and red wine vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. While whisking the mixture, add the virgin olive oil in a slow stream.

Drizzle some of this olive oil and mustard mixture onto the inside cuts of the bread.

Slice the tuna in long slivers approximately ½-inch thick. Season with salt, pepper and freshly squeezed lemon juice and grill to medium to medium-well.

Slice tomatoes and arrange on bread.

Layer grilled tuna with finely sliced onions on top of the tomatoes. Top with anchovies, capers, cornichons and black olives.

Drizzle with the remaining olive oil-Dijon mustard dressing.

Cover with the other half of the loaf and press slightly.

Wrap tightly with foil, and set aside for at least 30 minutes so the bread can soak up the juices.

Cut it into thick slices just before serving.

This vegetarian sandwich recipe is from **Rolando Laudico**, chef and proprietor, Chef Laudico Culinary Services:

Grilled Vegetarian Sandwich with Balsamic Onion Compote

GRILLED Vegetarian Sandwich with Balsamic Onion Compote

1 medium-size eggplant, 1 big red bell pepper, 1 medium-size zucchini (all cut ½-inch thick, diagonally) or any vegetable that you can grill
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp garlic
1 tbsp fresh basil, optional
2 tsp sugar
1 large loaf bread (French bread, sourdough, or any favorite)
6 slices of your favorite cheese
6 pcs sun-dried tomatoes, sliced, soften in warm water, optional

For Balsamic Onion Compote:
2 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp rosemary, optional
2 c onions, sliced thickly
¼ c balsamic vinegar
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Mix olive oil, garlic, basil, salt, pepper. Brush on to vegetables. Grill or bake until soft and tender but with a bite. Set aside.

CHEF Rolando Laudico, chef and proprietor, Chef Laudico Culinary Services

To make balsamic onion compote: In a pan, heat olive oil, add rosemary and sliced onions. Cook until tender.

Add balsamic vinegar and sugar. Cook until vinegar is "syrupy." Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Cut the bread in half and grill both sides or bake in the oven until crisp on the outside and soft inside.

To assemble: Lay grilled vegetables on bread, add onion compote, sun-dried tomatoes then cheese slices.

Top it with the other half loaf and wrap in foil or plastic.

David Pardo de Ayala, executive chef of Discovery Suites, shares this recipe:

Pan Bagnat Ayala

1 one-lb loaf, unsliced, French baguette
1/3 c basil leaves
½ c chopped flat leaf parsley
2 six-ounce cans tuna in olive oil, undrained
2 plum tomatoes, diced
1 can artichoke hearts in water, 15 ounces, drained, sliced
3 tbsp capers, drained
2/3 c coarsely chopped pitted kalamata olives
½ c chopped red onion, thinly sliced, rinsed in hot water, drained and cooled
2 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Slice bread in half, lengthwise.

Partially remove some of the interior of the loaf, leaving ¾-inch shell.

Brush bread with some olive oil from the can tuna, line with basil leaves in single layer.

Combine drained tuna, tomatoes, capers, parsley, onion, lemon juice in medium bowl to blend. Season to taste.

Spoon tuna into bottom bread shell. Sprinkle olives on top of tuna, then the sliced artichokes.

Cover with top half and wrap tightly with plastic. Place in shallow baking pan; top with another baking pan and weight with heavy cans. Place in the chiller overnight.

On picnic day, slice and serve.

Next week, the final picnic episode, recipes from Jessie and Ernie.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph.

Quick and easy recipes for picnic party

PLANNING A PICNIC party this summer? San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center has some recipes you may want to try.

Bacon and Dried Mango Pilaf

2 tbsp Magnolia Nutri-Oil
½ c Purefoods Maple-flavored Bacon, chopped
2 cloves Taiwan garlic, chopped
¼ c chopped shallots
2 tbsp grated ginger
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 ½ c rice, long-grain, rinsed
2 ½ c warm chicken broth
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp raisins
¼ c dried ripe mangoes, chopped

Place garlic, shallots and ginger in a mortar and pestle and pound until a pasty mixture is achieved. Set aside.

Heat oil in a sauté pan. Pan-fry bacon until golden in color. Using a slotted spoon, remove bacon and set aside. In the same pan, stir-fry garlic mixture. Stir in turmeric and rice. Cook for 2 minutes over low heat and gradually add chicken broth. Allow to simmer then add salt. Transfer to a rice cooker and continue cooking until rice is tender. Just before serving, stir in raisins, dried mangoes and bacon.

Makes 4 to 5 servings.

ITALIAN Pasta Salad

Chicken, Ham and Herbed Cheese Rolls

500 g Magnolia Chicken Breast Fillet
Salt and white pepper

Filling:
225 g bar Magnolia Cream Cheese, softened
2 tbsp chopped fresh basil
2 tbsp chopped parsley
1 ½ tsp minced garlic
250 g Purefoods Cooked Ham

Coating:
¾ c all-purpose flour
½ tsp white pepper
½ tsp salt
1 c melted Magnolia Gold Butter
1 c Japanese bread crumbs

Pound chicken breast fillets to flatten. Season with salt and pepper.

Set aside.

Filling:

Mix cream cheese, parsley, basil and garlic in a bowl. Set aside.

Coating:

In a bowl, combine flour, salt and pepper. Set aside.

In another bowl, place bread crumbs. Set aside.

Assembly:

Place a slice of Purefoods Cooked ham on one side of the pounded chicken. Spread cream cheese mixture on top. Roll to secure filling. Dredge chicken rolls in flour, then in melted butter and finally in crumb mixture. Arrange chicken rolls in a greased baking dish and bake in a pre-heated 350°F oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Drizzle occasionally with melted butter during baking.

Makes 8 servings.

Italian Pasta Salad

2 tbsp minced garlic
3 tbsp fresh basil leaves
½ c olive oil
1/3 c lemon juice
½ c Magnolia Cheddar Cheese, grated
Salt and pepper to taste
½ kg twist pasta, cooked according to package directions
1 c Purefoods Cooked Ham, sliced into strips
½ c sliced black olives
½ c fresh tomatoes, sliced into thin wedges
½ c red and green bell peppers, seeded and sliced into thin strips
¼ c cucumber, sliced into thin strips

To prepare dressing, puree garlic and basil leaves in a food processor. While mixing, slowly pour olive oil and lemon juice. Add grated cheese. Mix until well blended. Season with salt and pepper. Chill and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine pasta, Purefoods Cooked Ham, black olives, tomatoes, bell peppers and cucumbers. Toss all ingredients then pour in dressing. Mix well. Transfer to a salad bowl and chill.

Makes 8 servings

CURRIED Chunkee Corned Beef in Pita Bread

Curried Chunkee Corned Beef in Pita Bread

2 tbsp Magnolia Nutri-Oil
½ c chopped white onions
1 190 g can Purefoods Chunkee Corned Beef
½ c sour cream
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp curry powder
3 pc pita bread, cut into halves
¼ c peeled and chopped cucumber

Heat oil in a skillet. Saute onions and add corned beef. Mix well and cook for 2 minutes over medium heat. Set aside.

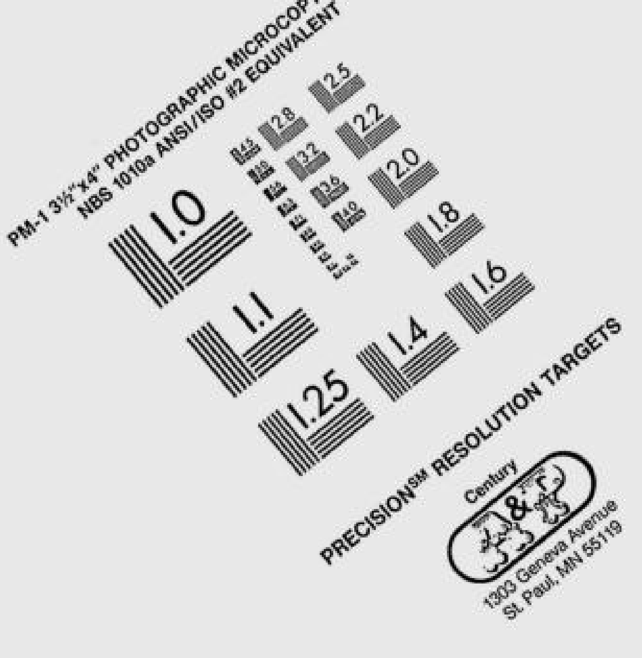
Pour sour cream in a saucepan. Stir in cayenne pepper and cumin powder. Remove from heat and set aside.

Assembly: Spoon corned beef in pita bread. Top with chopped cucumber. Drizzle with curry sauce on top.

Makes 3 servings.

NO ISSUES:

APRIL 14 – 15, 2006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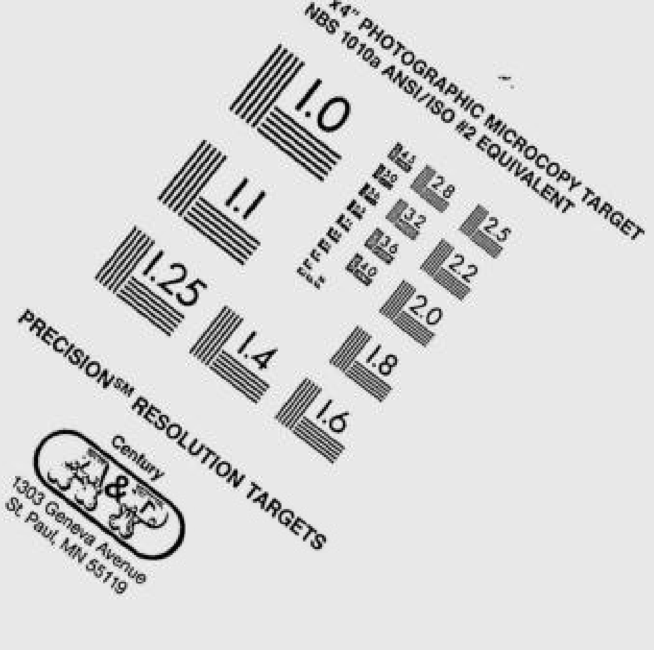
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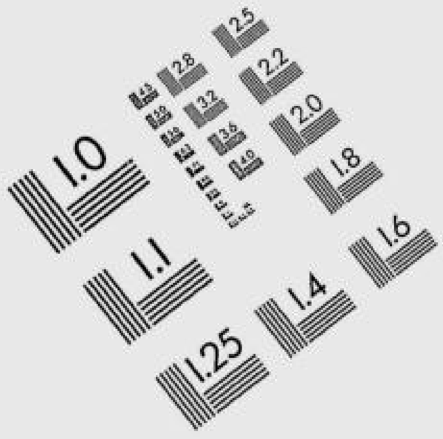
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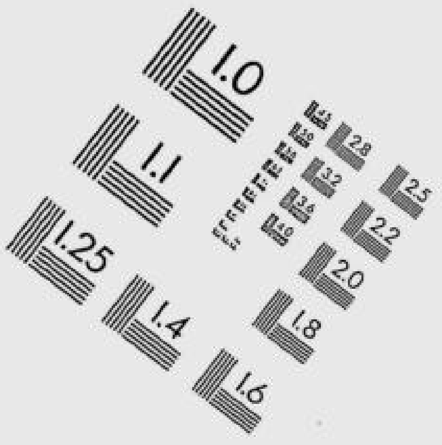
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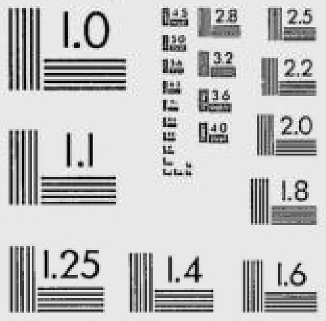
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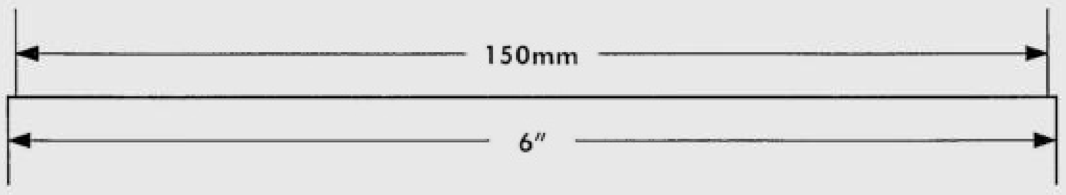

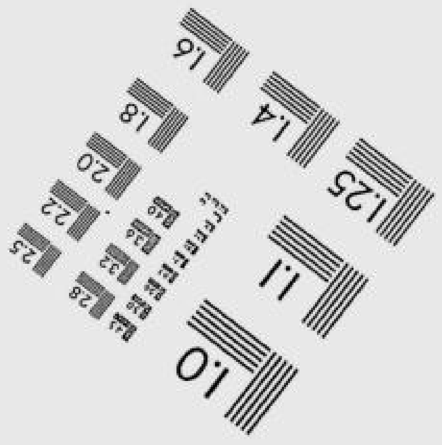
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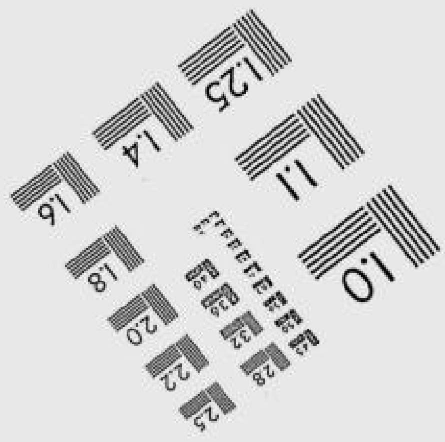
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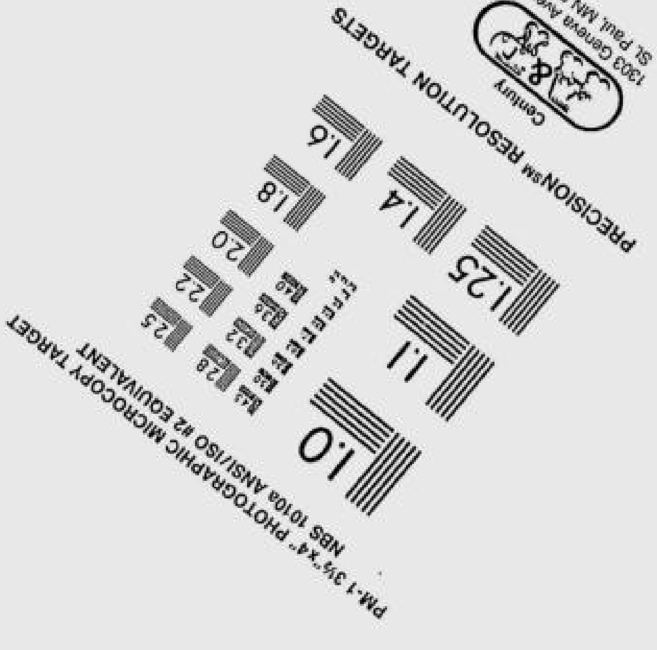
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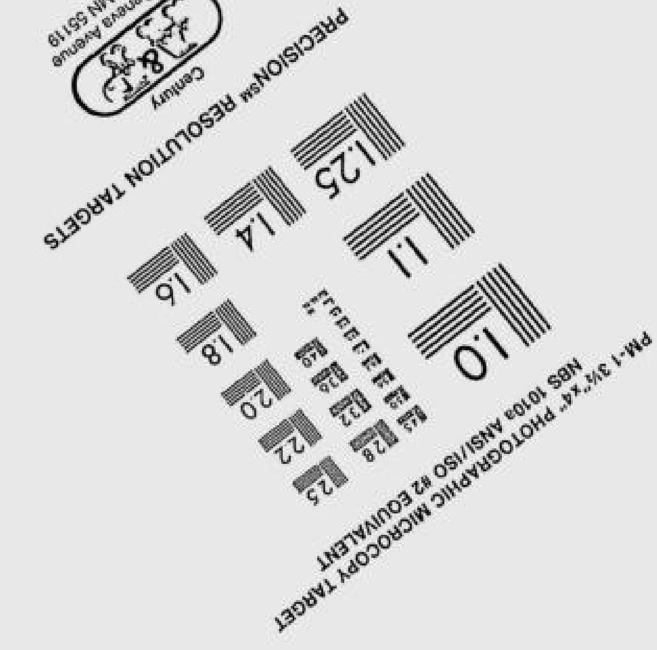
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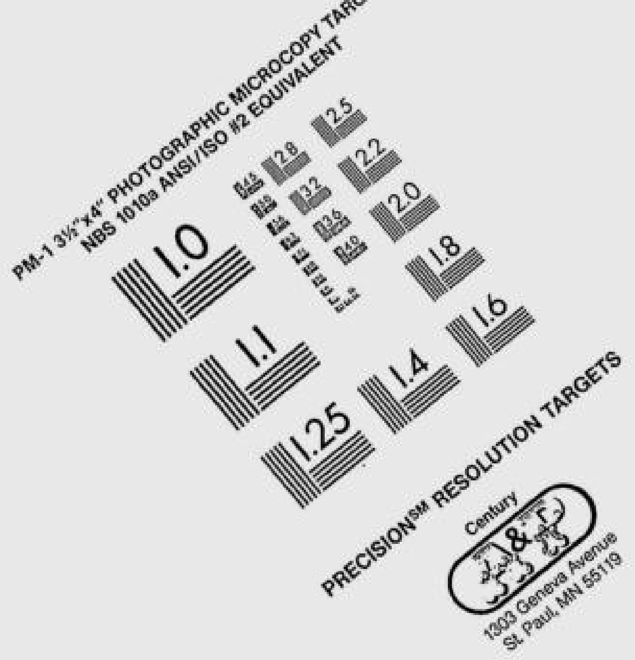
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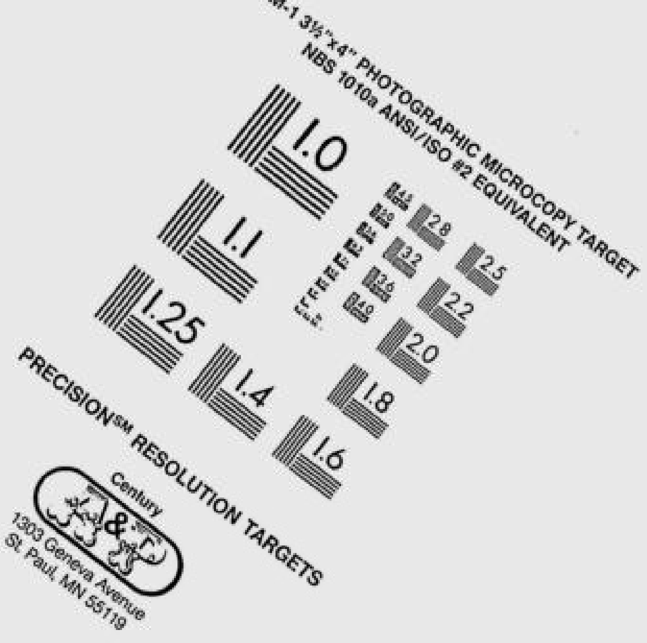
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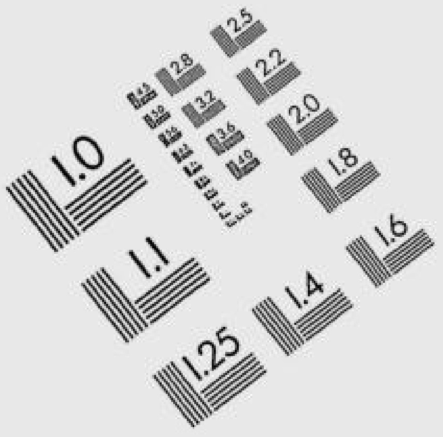
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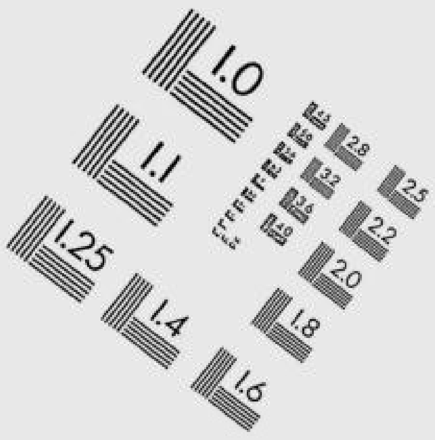
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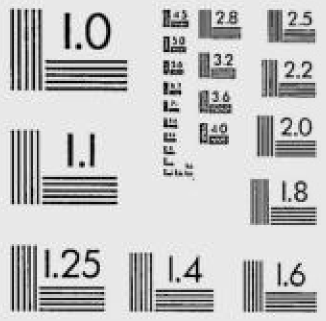
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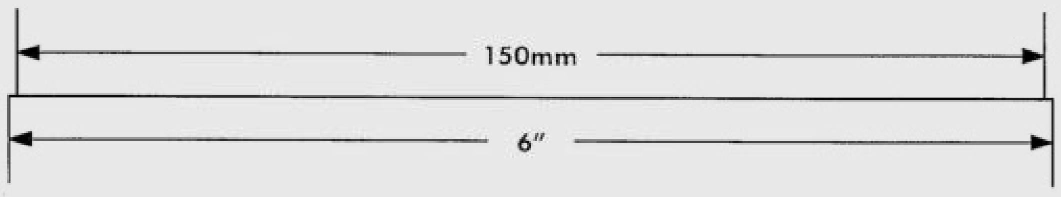

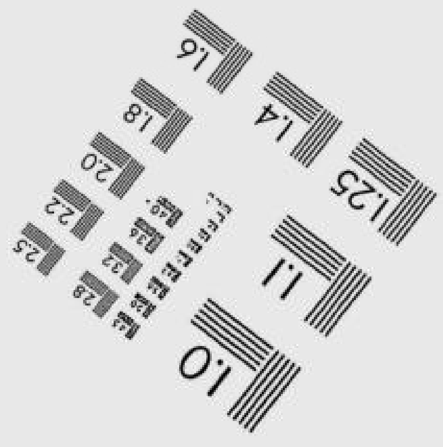
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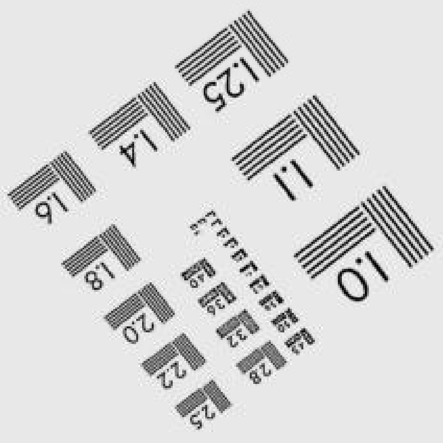
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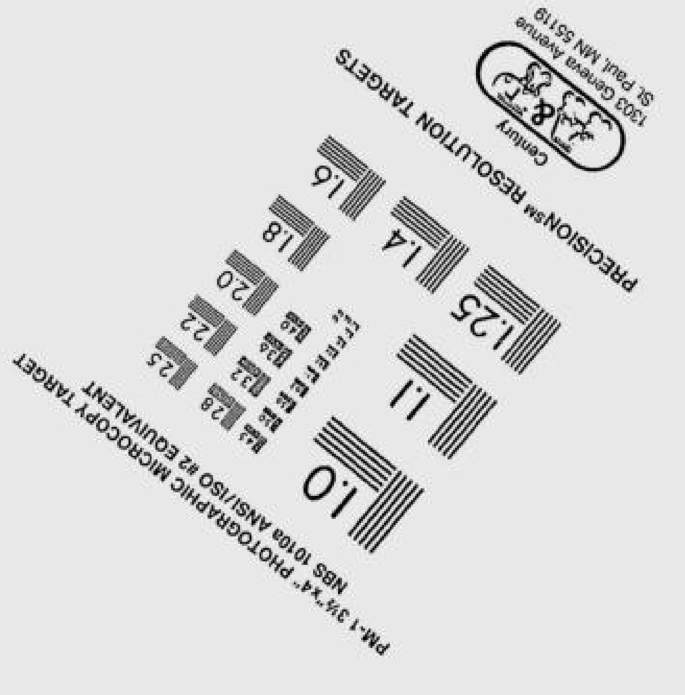
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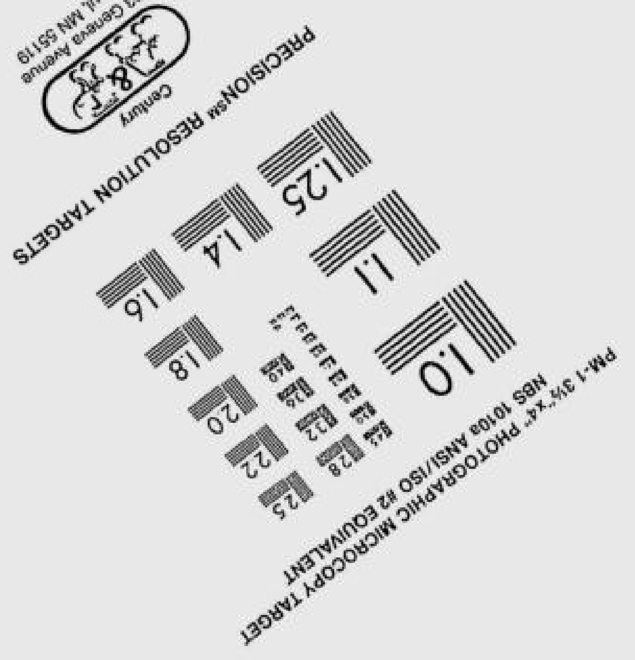
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